

## **Medium-term Strategic Plan of the Institute of Archaeology of the Research Centre for the Humanities (2020–2023)**

### The external environment

The Institute of Archaeology has been firmly embedded in international archaeological scholarship, and it has a continually developing research and processing practice for decades, which has recently undergone a substantial change in response to the new research agenda and methods. The Institute strives to forge and maintain a constructive relationship with the Archaeological Departments of Hungarian universities, with museums engaged in archaeological activities, with the authorities responsible for heritage protection and with the bodies responsible for legislation in these fields, while performing its academic public functions.

### The internal environment

One of the Institute's main strength is continuity in the positive sense of the word: the significant intellectual capital accumulated by successive generations of scholars is outstanding by both Hungarian and international standards. A similar favourable trend is research and publication activity with a preference for comprehensive tasks. Although it has not proved possible to study every archaeological period with the same intensity. Instead of covering the entire spectrum, our goal is to support the efficient work of larger *research groups* who are *competitive* on both Hungarian and international level. The new structure of departments waiting for approval also reflects this effort. Hiring young researchers, reclassifying fellows based on their academic output, and reasonably increasing the headcount are becoming increasingly difficult. Similarly, as a consequence of low *salaries*, the Institute has been struggling to retain and motivate fellows competitive also by international standards. Institute's prestige and the professional and community commitment of the overwhelming majority of the researchers have constrained the brain drain, but now the tide seems to be turning.

### Mission statement

The Institute is one of the leading institutions of Hungarian archaeological scholarship, which has been engaged in source study and basic research since its foundation; the Institute conducts excavations and surveys of both methodological and scientific significance publishing the findings in monographs. The archaeological research agenda of the Institute spans the period from the Mesolithic to the Early Modern Period, with a greater focus on specific periods and on the interaction between humans and their environment during the historical periods. Archaeology as a discipline is part of historical research, at the same time, its distinctive source material calls for a multi-disciplinary, hard-science approach serving as a breakout in some fields (e.g. in the study of the Migration Period and Hungarian prehistory).

Although the Institute is not an educational institution, it considers its task to contribute to the education of future researchers. Its fellows take part in education, partly as full-time employees of universities (Pázmány Péter Catholic University [PPKE], Eötvös Loránd University [ELTE]), and partly as guest lecturers, as well as members of the archaeological programmes of doctoral schools, especially of the one associated with ELTE. Another area of education is the Young Researcher Scheme, which enables researchers below the age of 35 to obtain a PhD degree through a substantial postgraduate education process. The prevention of the most talented young fellows' leaving the research network, or even Hungary, once we have invested

a large sum of money and intellectual potential into them for objective reasons, is a problem to be solved yet.

### The Institute's strategic goals

The Institute's goals are two-fold: to fulfill its public duties in Hungarian archaeological scholarship and heritage protection and to ensure successful participation in international and Hungarian research projects. One of the Institute's major priorities is the continuation and digitisation of the Archaeological Topography of Hungary project. In Hungary, the Institute was among the first in the discipline to react to the methodological changes in international research trends and to adopt and promote the GIS-based data processing of settlement archaeological research and the introduction and application of non-destructive diagnostic procedures. Building on a decade of experience, the internationally recognized Laboratory of Archaeogenetics attains a leading position in Hungarian archaeogenetic research and development; our goal is to maintain and further strengthen that.

Our research projects are funded by various grants and one of our main priorities is to ensure the continuity of our projects. The Institute makes outstanding efforts to be an equal partner in international collaborative projects. The maintenance and development of already existing long-term partnerships is another important priority, as is the widest possible dissemination of our results in various journals as well as on prestigious scientific forums. In addition to our international publication practice, we make every effort to present our work in Hungary, partly in our academic publications (Antaeus the Institute's foreign-language yearbook, monographs and compendiums of studies), in the *Acta Archaeologica* journal edited by the Institute, and partly in a newly-launched book series published in Hungarian and English (*Hereditas Archaeologica Hungariae*).

### Performance indicators

The Institute continuously uploads publications and citations to the Storage for the Hungarian Scientific Publications (MTMT) system (for grants, scientific degrees and titles, reports), however, this does not necessarily provide a realistic reflection of the research community's achievements. One definite tendency in the Institute's publication activity is to increase the proportion of foreign-language publications and the research community's contributions to prestigious foreign journals and other publications as well as to journals with a high impact factor. The fellows of the Institute regularly participate in international conferences, and in addition to their conference talks and papers, they also write comprehensive works, based on the research findings of longer research cycles. Domestic and international embeddedness is a pre-condition to successful grants, which is a reliable indicator of the Institute's performance.

### Action plan of the Institute for 2020–2023, planning of institution-level programmes and projects

The recent, transitional situation of the Institute of Archaeology makes it rather difficult to make strategic plans such as this document. Nevertheless, the research and organizational structure that had evolved over the decades within the HAS, the national and international projects panning the period of transition, and the criteria of internal academic quality assurance are important signposts that help the Institute perform its tasks. Our plans are based on the new structure of departments elaborated in November 2019, awaiting approval.

The Department of Prehistoric Archaeology studies the history of nearly seven thousand years in the central region of the Carpathian Basin from the Mesolithic up to the Iron Age, in the framework of broad-ranging national and international cooperations. In the years of 2020–2023, the Department considers it a priority to carry out methodological development, in particular in three fields: (1) absolute chronological, archaeometric and bioarchaeological examinations, (2) micro-regional studies, and (3) the processing of large quantities of old and new assemblages.

The research carried out by the Department on the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods focuses on the complex study of Southern Transdanubia. This region served as a key contact zone between the Balkans and Central Europe, and cannot be ignored in the European research of the period. Settlement archaeological research covers the evaluation of settlements unearthed by large-scale excavations (e.g. Alsónyék-Bátaszék, Balatonszárszó-Kis-erdei-dűlő, Tolna-Mözs, Szederkény-Kukorica-dűlő) as related works span several periods of research programs and grants. The topics of numerous PhD dissertations defended or completed fit nicely into the Institute's research agenda; their publication as monographs will be an important task of the upcoming years. The Neolithic site-complex at Alsónyék-Bátaszék deserves special attention. Its approximately 2,500 Neolithic graves provide the most important source material for the research of burials and the funerary cult.

In addition to traditional research methods, new technologies will be applied during studies of the material culture, as part of a project funded by the National Research, Development and Innovation Office (NRDIO/NKFIH) between 2020–2023. Development of a regional absolute chronology resting on solid foundations will be pursued. Bioarchaeological research is also continued (i.e. archaeogenetics, nutritional biology, and mobility). The exhibition which presented the life of the early food-producing communities in Pécs will be followed by a significant international exhibition (Frankfurt am Main).

Research of the Copper Age will focus on the late part of the period. As part of an NRDIO/NKFIH-funded programme (2018–2022), the archaeological and bioarchaeological examination of the Late Copper Age burials is aimed at the complex assessment of the extensive Copper Age cemeteries of Budakalász and Pilismarót, including their anthropological, pathological, microbiological, archaeogenetic and isotope chemical analysis. At the end of the project, the manuscript of the monograph summing up the research findings will be completed, and will be presented by the contributors at an international conference to be held in Budapest in 2022.

Research on the so-called pit-grave (Yamnaya) communities burying their dead under kurgans, and arriving in the Great Hungarian Plain at the end of the Late Copper Age/in the Early Bronze Age, at the turn of the 4th and 3rd millennia BC from the east, revealed that this population movement played a crucial role in the genetic evolution of modern Europe. Between 2019–2023 the members of the Department will take part as partners in an ERC Advanced Grant programme (Yamnaya Impact); the research will concentrate on the Eastern European steppe and the territory of present-day Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. This work is important not only because of its bioarchaeological and archaeological results, but also from the perspective of cultural heritage protection and nature conservation (i.e. the protection of mounds/kurgans). The researchers intend to publish their population genetic and archaeological findings in a Nature article in 2021.

Since 2015, research on the Bronze Age has been partly carried out in the framework of the “Lendület” [Momentum] Mobility Research Team, which will complete its work at the end of June 2020. Currently, we have no information about the possible maintenance of this programme, which has a great impact on our plans for the period of 2020–2023, including the

preparation of a synthesis and other publications, as well as the submission of an ERC Advanced Grant application.

The archaeogenetic analysis of nearly one hundred human bone samples is currently underway to study the Bronze Age population in the 2nd millennium BC. The results are expected to be published in 2022.

The archaeometallurgical examination of copper, bronze, and golden objects is especially important in mapping the network of relations on a European scale in this period. The evaluation of the unique series of component- and metallurgical examination performed on more than one hundred Bronze Age objects made from copper/bronze and gold in the territory of Hungary will be accomplished in the years of 2020–2023.

In several cases (Benta Valley, Kakucs area, Sopron area, Füzesabony and Jászdózsa area), the research on settlement patterns of the period will continue with the compilation of monographs.

The study of extended mass graves (appearing in this period) and burials represents a new direction in the research of the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age. The findings are summarized in a PhD dissertation, which will be published in the upcoming years. The first results of the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age genetic programme based on a broad collaboration established in 2018, are expected to be published in 2022.

#### *Department of Ancient World, Migration Period and Medieval Archaeology*

Reorganization of the range of topics covered by the Institute was needed due to the increasing importance of topics spanning multiple periods, observed most clearly within this Department. The Department was created as a result of the merging of two research teams: the one for Ancient World and Migration Period archaeology, and the one dealing with Conquest-period, medieval and early modern archaeology.

Based on earlier research, archaeology of Classical Antiquity is represented by the study of temple architecture of the Peloponnese and Classical Greece. Within the research of the Late Antiquity, the investigation of late Roman internal fortresses (Ságvár and Fenékpuszta) has come into focus. The assessment of pottery finds from Fenékpuszta is carried out in collaboration with the Leibniz Institute of Leipzig, while research on the fort of Ságvár is funded by an NRDIO/NKFIH programme. The evaluation and publication of the results of earlier excavations are expected to be finished by 2022, completed by the assessment of the burial practices of the late Roman cemetery at Ságvár.

The fellows of the Institute have been participating in the research programme aimed at offering a modern analysis of the Seuso Treasures in collaboration with the Research Centre for Astronomy and Earth Sciences, the Museum of Fine Arts and the Hungarian National Museum. The art historical research led by a member of the Department is studying the silver vessels of the Seuso Treasures in the context of the Roman Empire as a whole. The fellow of the Institute has partaken in the preparation of the catalogue of the major international exhibition presenting silverwork from the Late Antiquity, as well as in the writing of the art historical chapters of the multi-volume Seuso monograph.

In recent years, a greater emphasis has been laid on the research of the Late Antique Mediterranean to better understanding of the impact of the late antique civilization on Barbarian peoples. This research direction will be continued with a great importance in the future as well, with a special focus on mapping the trade of the Black Sea area, on the presence of Christian communities in the Northern Balkans and in the Carpathian Basin, and on the Christian burial customs of the Mediterranean as a whole. The latter will be published in a monograph in the forthcoming years, and a Humboldt grant application will also be submitted in this context.

Among our former and temporarily suspended topics, we will re-launch the research of the Roman Barbaricum, in particular the analysis of the finds from the Sarmatian, Hun and early Germanic Periods. The catalogue of the Hungarian National Museum's Barbaricum Collection is under preparation in cooperation with the museum. The fellows of the Institute will pursue the research with non-invasive methods on the typology of Sarmatian-period burial grounds of the Great Hungarian Plain, the examination of Hun-period grave ceramics from the Carpathian Basin, research on Hun-period cast metal cauldrons in a Eurasian context (in cooperation with the Hungarian National Museum), and the assessment of the Gepidian-period cemetery at Tiszapüspöki. These research projects are funded by a Bolyai Scholarship and an NRDIO/NKFIH grant.

The recently obtained Synergy Grant of the European Research Council (ERC) titled "HistoGenes: Integrating genetic, archaeological and historical perspectives on Eastern Central Europe, 400–900 AD", in the amount of 10 million euros, has great importance in regard with the population history of the Migration Period; the archaeologists of the Institute – as well as the staff of the Laboratory of Archaeogenetics – participate in the project as the beneficiary partners of ELTE. The six-year programme focuses on the integrative paleogenetic, archaeological, anthropological and historical study of the late antique and early medieval population of East-Central Europe. Genetic samples are prepared, partially examined and analysed in the Laboratory of Archaeogenetics. The multidisciplinary assessment of several key Germanic and Avar-period cemeteries (Budakalász, Szólád) will be accomplished by the Department.

The Institute will continue its contribution to the systematic, corpus-type publication of the Migration-period finds (*Monumenta Germanorum Archaeologica Hungariae* and *Monumenta Avarorum Archaeologica*, in cooperation with the Hungarian National Museum). The research of the various finds and problems of the Avar Period remains an organic part of the Department's work. In collaboration with the University of Freiburg, two doctoral dissertations are expected to be published about the 6th–8th-centuries Mediterranean connections of the Carpathian Basin, and the belt sets from the Early and Middle Avar Period, respectively. A research project funded by a Bolyai Research Scholarship summarizes and interprets the Avar–Byzantine wars from an archaeological perspective. Further results can be expected in relation to the European appearance of stirrups in the Eurasian context; the weapon finds of several Avar-period cemeteries are being processed.

In the research of the Carolingian-period centre at Zalavár, the excavation coming to an end will be followed up with systematic processing, thanks to which the site (as well as the Carolingian Transdanubia) can fit well into the historical context of 9th-century Europe. As part of that, a monograph is expected to be released in Hungarian and German in the course of 2020 about the history of Pannonia in the Carolingian Period. A German-language monograph will be published in the framework of the Árpadian Dynasty Programme about the archaeological site at Zalavár-Rezes. By 2022, the assessment of the finds of the cemetery located around Hadrian's temple and Virgin Mary's church at Zalavár-Vársziget will be accomplished.

The other axis of the Department's activities is the research agenda spans the period from the Hungarian Conquest and the foundation of the medieval Hungarian state to the Early Modern Age, the turn of the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries, with the main focus on archaeological studies that integrate the written and cartographic sources as well as the findings of various archaeometric analyses that are gaining more and more importance (absolute chronological dating, lifestyle and nutrition, environmental history).

As part of a collaboration between the Institute, the Hungarian National Museum and the Department of Archaeology of the University of Szeged, the compilation and publication of the corpus volumes presenting the burial grounds of the period lasting from the time of the

Hungarian Conquest till the Árpáadian Age remains an important scientific objective (“Hungary’s grave finds from the Conquest Period and the Early Árpáadian Age”). The project is funded by an NRDIO/NKFIH grant till the end of 2020, and supported by a supplementary publication grant from the Árpáadian Dynasty Programme. Several volumes are under preparation (Lower Maros Valley, Somogy County, Hajdú-Bihar County II); the financing of the publication of the above is yet to be ensured.

Research projects on Late Medieval and Early Modern Periods will be implemented in a regional scale, as well as in the broader context of the Carpathian Basin and Europe, and are clustered around various research topics.

Part of the Transdanubian research projects focus on the Pilis. The archaeological relics of the medieval royal residences and the associated monasteries founded by royal patrons in the Pilis Mountains will be continued as part of the Árpáadian Dynasty Programme by 2022. The monograph presenting the Cistercian monastery in the Pilis will be followed by monographs studying the remains of the provostry of Dömös, and the Pauline monasteries at Pilisszentlélek and Kesztlölc-Klastrompuszta and parallel to that, the historical-archaeological assessment of the Medium Regni.

After some follow-up work on a previously completed project on medieval and Ottoman-period castles, forts and settlements as well as on the period’s landscape and environmental history in Southern Transdanubia, especially in the region of Barcs and Berzence located along the Dráva river, a second English-language volume will sum up the archaeological results (to be completed by 2021). In the next years, research on medieval and early modern castles of Transdanubia (led by a fellow of the Institute) will focus on the excavation of Dombóvár-Gólyavár and on the assessment of its relics together with the evaluation of the finds from Csókakő castle included in the National Castle Project. The publication of the results also depends on the success of research grants to be submitted in the years concerned.

Research on medieval Szeklerland has a long history of projects within the Institute. After several longer, comprehensive works, the corpus of the medieval and early modern relics of Szekler runic script will be published in 2020, and an English-language volume presenting the history of Szeklerland will also be completed, in collaboration with the RCH Institute of History.

In 2020 a volume on the new results of the environmental archaeological research on the Carpathian Basin in the Middle Ages (utilization of arable lands, grasslands, forests, water and raw material; cereal production, domestic animals and wild game, issues of climate) will be prepared. Archaeological data are paramount in the study of historical water level fluctuation and water regulation (dams, ditches, wells of archaeological periods), as well as in the reconstruction of archaic technologies.

In the upcoming years, landscape archaeological research is planned to focus on the Central Tisza and the Körös Region. The realization of the project partly depends on an NRDIO/NKFIH grant to be submitted in 2020.

The research team is committed to the publication of volumes that offer systematic overview of the medieval and early modern archaeology of the Carpathian Basin, and can be used both as handbook-like volumes and educational material.

In cooperation with other departments of the Institute, the members of the Department (going out of their way) have pursued the works of the Archaeological Topography of Hungary project that slowed down or stopped earlier due to the lack of funds. Currently and in the years ahead of us, topographical works will affect three geographical areas: 1) Csongrád County, where we are conducting a topographical survey in the northern area of Hódmezővásárhely in cooperation with the University of Szeged, as well as the museums and the Government Office concerned. The results are to be prepared in a pilot volume in 2020; 2) the works of the

topographical volume covering the medieval relics of Székesfehérvár and its surroundings as part of of the (till 2021), 3) the NRDIO/NKFIH project supporting works studying the prehistoric and medieval hillforts and castles of Pest county has ended; the supplementary works and the volume editing are being carried out without sufficient funds, and their completion is expected by 2021, with the cooperation of the Institute's fellows specialized in prehistory.

Several innovative elements of our work, especially the non-destructive archaeological surveys (drone surveys, new geophysical and geographic information methods) can be efficiently utilized during major development projects. We are envisaging to re-launch these activities on a greater scale in collaboration with the Castle Headquarters Integrated Development Centre Nonprofit Ltd., the minimum requirement for which on behalf of the Institute is the setting-up of a team composed of young archaeologists well-versed in GIS, editing and fieldwork. Thanks to the earlier Infra Grants, the bulk of the field equipment is already at our disposal. Launching and implementing new topographical programmes is impossible without hiring additional staff and ensuring an adequate financial background; at present, this task surpasses the capacities of the Institute in all respects.

#### *Department of Bioarchaeology and Environmental Archaeology*

With its research agenda covering several fields and research directions, the activity of the Department that received significant technical development grants (Infra Grants) over the past couple of years, is closely intertwined with the work of the Institute's both departments organized according to archaeological periods. Nevertheless, during the long months of the HAS–ELKH transition and amidst the general uncertainty, the Institute lost all of its fellows experienced in non-destructive surveying and GIS and in some of the non-destructive laboratory instrumental diagnostics (e.g. microscope systems), which has put the Institute in a difficult position. A successful recruitment – e.g. through the Young Researcher Scheme – to fill this void will be crucial in the upcoming years. Another task of similar importance is staff recruitment for the Laboratory of Archaeogenetics.

Among the plans of the Laboratory of Archaeogenetics for 2020–2023, key priority is given to the tasks of the ERC-SYG project carried out in an international framework (6,000 samplings, creation of 1,000 DNA libraries, WG-based analysis of 500 samples), to further research topics in cooperation with Max Planck Institute of Jena (Early Iron Age and Celtic Periods), to the research topics of the Árpádian Dynasty Programme (6th–12th centuries on the steppe, 9th–12th centuries in the Carpathian Basin) to end by 2023, and to the research conducted in the framework of “Lendület” [Momentum] and NRDIO/NKFIH projects. An indispensable condition of the internationally competitive implementation of the above is the retention and increase of the professional headcount of the laboratory, as well as the reliable, basic-type funding of the laboratory's technological procedures that is not tied to particular projects. In terms of replacement and hiring, our active participation in education at ELTE Faculty of Science Biological Doctoral School is very helpful, accomplished by supervising PhD dissertations and heading doctoral programmes.

The Institute is planning to conduct further bioarchaeological research (mostly isotope analyses aimed at learning more about lifestyle and mobility) with the involvement of the CEZA Laboratory of Mannheim and the Institute for Geological and Geochemical Research of the Research Centre for Astronomy and Earth Sciences.

A key strategic objective is to ensure the personal and material (hardware and software) conditions of bioinformatical–biostatistical analyses that play a central role in interpreting bioarchaeological research findings, and to establish the network conditions of BIG DATA-type analyses and calculations. However, the possibilities of these objectives are provided in

international research frameworks, they also presume the establishment of cooperation with Hungarian universities/ELKH institutes.

In order to be able to implement the topics of bioarchaeological projects, HR conditions must be improved in the traditional areas of archaeobiology (paleoanthropology, archaeozoology); moreover, funds must be obtained for the maintenance and calibration of the massive equipment.

#### *Documentation and Conservation Department*

The main priorities of the Department are professional storage and preservation of the Data Repository's archive materials of historic value, to provide information for external researchers and the Institute's fellows, as well as digitisation the traditional archive records and shift to digital data storage that can be easily queried. The comprehensive digitisation of the stock requires additional financial resources.

In earlier years, the Graphics Division has always reliably undertaken the preparation of illustrations to the Institute's publications, however, by the end of 2019, the replacement of retiring colleagues and hiring younger staff members became a cardinal task.

The minimal, but well-trained staff of the well-equipped Conservation Laboratory proved sufficient for silica-based conservation for the moment, but the metal restoration section and the X-ray lab of the Laboratory should be extended with an additional staff member and new works.

#### *The library*

The nationally and internationally renowned library of the Institute was merged into the joint library of the RCH. The development of the archaeological section of the library (as of the whole institution) is an essential strategic goal, including broad-ranging, authentic scientific information provision and research assistance both in traditional and digital form. The digital assessment of the entire humanities section and the establishment of a common platform for humanities that is easily queried, as well as building an RFID-based, uniform registration and security system are the main concerns of the library. Similarly, it is of key priority to ensure the costs of acquisitions and the subscription fees of the international databases; moreover, the regular payment of postal costs is also cardinal for the exchange programmes.

#### The economic background to the Institute's action plan for 2020–2023

In all probability, the financial plans of the Institute will continue to be mostly project-dependent. The financing of tasks not belonging to these projects (e.g. planned excavations, archaeometric analyses, works of the Archaeological Topography of Hungary) requires clear scientific policy decision-making and ensuring the costs of the works to a reasonable extent on behalf of the competent institution. Without wage development, fellows will certainly continue to leave the Institute, which will result great difficulties in applying for national and international research grants successfully.

Monitoring of the activities deriving from the strategy (feedback), performance measurement and control of the implementation of the strategic activities

At the beginning of each year, members of the research community submit a written report of their research and present a verbal report at an internal meeting, covering also their published studies and completed manuscripts, and answering any questions on specialist activities and

strategy. With the involvement of the Department leaders, the scientific board of the Institute evaluates and analyses the achievements and plans in several rounds. The Institute's director evaluates the research community's work on an annual basis.

17 December 2019, Budapest

Elek Benkő  
Director

Pál Fodor  
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