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CONFINIA  
ET  
HORIZONTES

THE ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY  
OF THE PREHISTORIC  
SÁRKÖZ REGION IN SOUTHERN HUNGARY

ESZTER BÁNFFY (ED.)





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CONFINIA ET HORIZONTES VOL. 1

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**The Environmental History  
of the Prehistoric Sárköz Region  
in Southern Hungary**

With 129 Figures, 19 Tables, and 1 Digital Supplement

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## *Lectori salutem!*

The launching of a new monograph series is a matter of courage and confidence. Courage that it is worthwhile to publish new books in this digital age of ours, and confidence in readers that they will be willing to take yet newer thick volumes in their hand and use them for their academic work or read them out of pure interest in prehistoric archaeology. The host institute, the Romano-Germanic Commission (RGK) of the German Archaeological Institute, has established, edited, and published several monograph series during its long life since it was founded in 1902: suffice it here to refer to the *Römisch-Germanische Forschungen*, the *Kolloquien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte*, the series *Die Ausgrabungen in Manching*, and to the *Limesforschungen*. So, one may rightly ask, wherefore yet another one?

During the past few years, research in the RGK has been organised around two major themes and two logistically separate work teams, which are nevertheless bound by many strands scientifically. Under the umbrella of *Forschungsfeld 2*, the research topics related to the Iron Age and the Roman provincial period, research on the Roman *limes* and on the Barbaricum, i. e. the regions not occupied by the Romans, as well as research on the Late Antique period are addressed through related overarching questions such as “border studies”. *Forschungsfeld 1*, established at a later date, brings together fields of research and grand themes that had commanded scholarly interest during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and were revived during the past decade as part of the RGK research agenda. These cover the Late Mesolithic and the transition to the Neolithic, alongside themes from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age. Currently, there are several RGK and collaborative projects with various institutions and colleagues based in different countries within the framework of this research group. Similarly to the work group focusing on later prehistoric and early historic periods, the basic research questions in Neolithic and Bronze Age studies are few, but they are closely related to each of the running projects and those in plan.

While members of the *Forschungsfeld 2* work team have had several options for publishing their findings in the traditional RGK monographs, the early periods could not be fitted into any of the already existing series. Hence the idea of establishing *Confinia et horizontes*. The title of the new series matches the major theme of *Forschungsfeld 1*, “Marginal zones, contact zones”. The choice of one Latin and one Greek word was wholly intentional: marginal, liminal zones would be ideal settings for potential interactions between different groups initially separate from each other, which then established contacts through exchanges and trade, and later expanded the contacts to a mutual sharing and transferring of innovations and knowledge. And, as is usually the case, these contacts can be traced in the genetic make-up of the once separate population groups. Our goal is to publish cutting-edge new research: principally the projects of the RGK community, but since the time of individual research and authorship has since long passed, these publications, as a rule, will present the findings of dynamic collaboration with other institutions. The monographs will be grouped according to the various collaborative projects. Although it is not our intention to break up *Confinia et horizontes* into subseries, we shall quite clearly indicate if a major project is published in more than one volume that these volumes are closely related. Even more importantly, individual volumes will never be publications released

solely by the RGK, but will be equally owned by our partner institutes. This can also be seen as a symbolic gesture: these days, archaeological research generally involves the joint effort of specialists of fieldwork, environmental and non-invasive landscape research, geo- and bioarchaeology, all brainstorming together. The evaluation will then be based on data coming from each field of investigation. It needs to be repeatedly stressed that there is no difference between the two *Forschungsfelder*, between the different periods and phases of archaeological periodisation. Prehistory and history are equally important chapters of the human past. The ultimate goal of *Confinia et horizontes* is to integrate the data provided by various disciplines and interpret them jointly, in the hope that the result will contribute to a reconstruction and better understanding of the various dimensions of past societies. In other words, we truly hope that our prehistoric data will ultimately lead to history writing.

ESZTER BÁNFFY