

Archaeomalacological analyses of the cores of Balaton and Fenékpusztta
Fenékpusztai és balatoni fúrások archeomalakológiai elemzése

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Lake Balaton is the largest freshwater lake in Central Europe, with an open water surface of ca. 593 km². It is 77 km long and 8 to 14 km wide, with an average depth of only 3 to 4 m. Between the Tihany Peninsula and the village of Szántód, Lake Balaton is at its most narrow, with a distance of only 1.5 km. The northernmost part of this strait, the so-called “Tihany well” is the deepest part of the lacustrine basin with a depth of 11.6 metres. Some independent neotectonic catchment basins, one of them, the area of the Kis-Balaton, is located west of the basin system of Lake Balaton, the second one, the area of Szigliget bay can be found northern basin system of Lake Balaton. Historical data and maps show that, up until the beginning of the 19th century, this extensive swamp used to be part of a larger unregulated lake system of Lake Balaton. This paper presents the results of a multidisciplinary palaeoecological and geoarchaeological study implemented on sedimentary sequences, including three undisturbed cores, of Keszthely-Fenékpusztta, Balatonederics and Balatontördemic. The sites form a part of the so called Kis-Balaton, Szigliget bay, Tördemic bay and areas situated in the western and northern parts of the neotectonic basin system of Lake Balaton. One of the principal aims of this study was to shed light on how former human societies and cultures shaped and altered their natural environment based on archeomalacological data. Another aim was to reconstruct the original environmental conditions characterizing the area preceding the emergence of a productive economy. Although several environmental-historical studies about the past 17.000 cal BP years have been carried out in the wider surroundings of the sites, this paper mainly focuses on and around the time of settlements from Mesolithic age to the Early Middle Ages. One aim was to test whether or not farming, which had evolved in the area of the Fenékpusztta peninsula during the Roman Age continued to be practiced during the Migration period. Changes over time in the natural endowments of the peninsula and its surroundings are documented.