

# LITIKUM

A Kőkor Kerekasztal folyóirata  
Journal of the Lithic Research Roundtable

13. évfolyam • Volume 13 • 2025





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Szerkesztők • Edited by

Zsolt Mester

Attila Király

György Lengyel

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## LITIKUM

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REVIEW ARTICLE

## Lithic Research Roundtable 15, 2025

Edited by Csaba Bálint<sup>a</sup>  & Attila Király<sup>b</sup> 

*a* – István Dobó Castle Museum, 3300 Eger, Vár köz 1; E-mail: [bc890321@gmail.com](mailto:bc890321@gmail.com)

*b* – Doctoral School of History, Institute of Archaeological Sciences, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, 4 Múzeum krt., 1088 Budapest, Hungary; E-mail: [attila@litikum.hu](mailto:attila@litikum.hu)

**Abstract.** The 15<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of Hungarian lithic specialists was held on December 5, 2025, at the István Dobó Castle Museum, Eger, organized by Csaba Bálint. The abstracts of the presentations and posters are as follows.

**Keywords:** Lithic Research Roundtable, conference, Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic

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### Use of pebble raw material during the Upper Palaeolithic in Hungary – 33 years later

András Markó<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Arts, University of Szeged, Szeged; e-mail: [marko.andras75@gmail.com](mailto:marko.andras75@gmail.com); <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7556-0091>*

The exploitation of pebble outcrops as raw material sources had several advantages during Prehistory. First, during the fluvial transport or abrasion near marine or lake shores, the inhomogenities of the raw rocks were removed by rolling and sediment transport, so the outcrops are enriched with relatively high-quality specimens. Secondly, the pieces of optimal dimensions and shapes for lithic tool manufacture could have been easily collected from the loose sediments, and, finally, in some cases, various raw material types, including coarse-grained quartzite and fine siliceous rocks, could have been available from single outcrops or geological formations.

In 1992, Viola Dobosi, during the first evaluation of the Mogyorósbánya lithic assemblage, in addition to the old-known Ságvár lithics, extended the classification of the Upper Palaeolithic

Ságvárian or Pebble Gravettian entity, dated to the last cold peak of the last glaciation (LGM). In the presentation, we review some technological traits of the lithic collections excavated at Szob in the Danube bend, Mogyorósbánya and Madras lying in the southernmost part of the Great Plain (Alföld).

As a result, two main methods were identified: blade and bladelet reduction based on single-platform cores and bladelet production of burin cores shaped basically on cortical flakes. The ‘archaic elements’ (pebble slices and segments, naturally backed knives as well as geometrically broken pebble types), emphasised earlier, are characteristic by-products of the special bladelet production based on raw material types collected from secondary raw material sources.

### The Hungarian Middle Palaeolithic in a broad perspective

Zsolt Mester<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Institute of Archaeological Sciences, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; UMR 7194 HNHP CNRS/MNH/UPVD, Paris, France; e-mail: [mester.zsolt@btk.elte.hu](mailto:mester.zsolt@btk.elte.hu); <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5874-5935>*

The Middle Danube valley represents one of the main contact areas of Europe. Its role is widely known in the dispersal of modern humans and the neolithisation of Europe. Concerning this role, no data were available for the older periods of the Palaeolithic. In his synthesis of the Middle Palaeolithic, published in 1976, Miklós Gábori have drawn the contacts of the Middle Palaeolithic industries of Hungary from western directions. In his big monograph in 2004, using larger cultural regions, Janusz K. Kozłowski have linked them with the industries of neighbouring territories in northern and southern directions too. These models are worth reviewing in light of the research conducted during the last two decades. The Central European relations of the Taubachian and the Micoquian seem to be continued. The eastern and southeastern relations of the bifacial leafpoints industries are questionable. Several possibilities arise for the interpretation of the relations of the Mousterian industries, which are worth studying in detail.

Gábori, M. (1976). *Les civilisations du Paléolithique moyen entre les Alpes et l'Oural*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó

Kozłowski, J. K. (2004). *Świat przed "rewolucja" neolityczną*. Kraków: Fogra Oficyna Wydawnicza (Wielka Historia Świata tom 1)

### **Közép-bérc (KÖH 51080) – Open-air Middle Palaeolithic site in the Gyöngyöspata Basin**

Attila Péntek<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Independent researcher; e-mail: attila.pentek@yahoo.com; <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3471-897X>*

In the administrative area of Gyöngyöspata, László Tóth, an agronomist from Pásztó, identified a considerable number of archaeological sites in the mid-1980s. Most of these sites have yielded valuable lithic assemblages which, from both a technological and typological perspective, can be attributed to the Middle Palaeolithic. The majority can be compared only with a few sites in the area of the nearby Szurdokpüspöki and with the side-scrapers-rich Mousterian industries of the Bükk Mountains. Another possible parallel is the Micoquian industry, whose nearest occurrence lies in the territory of the neighbouring Gyöngyöstarján. The presentation provides, in an overview form, a description of the Middle

Palaeolithic site situated at “Közép-bérc”, located at the western end of Gyöngyöspata, directly on the north-eastern bank of the Száraz-patak-völgy stream Valley. The toolkit is dominated by standard Mousterian tools. A peculiarity of the lithic material is the presence of the Levallois concept expressed in the form of cores, as well as a bifacial knife (“Keilmesser”) preform. These finds raise the question of the relationship between the Mousterian industry, the Levallois concept, and the industry containing Micoquian elements. It should also be noted that traces of the Levallois concept have been identified at several other sites within the Gyöngyöspata Basin. However, far-reaching conclusions cannot be drawn on the basis of surface-collected artefacts alone. A similar duality is characteristic of many significant cave and open-air sites across Central Europe, particularly in Germany (Salzgitter-Lebenstedt, Königsau, Sesselfelsgrötte) and southern Poland (the Biśnik and Ciemna cave sites). To clarify both the cultural context of the assemblage and its stratigraphic position, a test excavation is strongly recommended at the “Közép-bérc” site.

### **Shelter? Dwelling? Burial site? – New Results from the Kő-lyuk I Project**

Péter Szolyák<sup>1</sup>, Tünde Mezei<sup>2</sup>, Veronika Edina Watah<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Herman Ottó Museum, Miskolc, Hungary; e-mail: palaeo.szp@gmail.com*

<sup>2</sup> *Herman Ottó Museum, Miskolc, Hungary*

The Kő-lyuk I Cave at Parasznya, researched since 1913, offers an exceptional opportunity to collect scientific information without stratigraphic interruption from the present day back to the end of the Middle Pleistocene by exploring its large area of untouched sediments. The research, prepared by the Herman Ottó Museum in 2010–2011 and launched in 2021, aims primarily to interpret the evidence and archaeological heritage of known (or presumed) prehistoric and Palaeolithic human presence in the context of the cave’s developmental history, striving for a complex, ecological approach in the excavation.

Based on the more than 1,300 archaeological and palaeontological finds uncovered so far, along with stratigraphic observations and absolute dating, we have been able to distinguish four time

horizons: the Late Bronze Age (Kyjatice culture), the Middle Neolithic (Bükk Linear Pottery culture), the introductory phase of the Holocene (Preboreal), and the Early Upper Palaeolithic (39–32 ky BP).

The most recent and noteworthy results of the excavations carried out in 2024–2025 include the identification and excavation of two prehistoric burials, as well as the dating and material analysis of a large Neolithic fireplace. The incompletely preserved, partially anatomically connected skeletal burial can be linked to a child aged around 6–7 who lived in the Middle Neolithic. The Late Bronze Age stone-cairn urn burial was found to be heavily disturbed and looted.

According to on-site stratigraphic observations and associated laboratory analyses, it is highly probable that the cave was uninhabitable during the Preboreal–Atlantic phases due to flooding. The current research results suggest that the previously assumed function of the cave should be reconsidered, especially in relation to the Neolithic and Bronze Ages.

### Leave no stone unturned: studying spatial patterns in Neolithic sites

András Füzesi<sup>1</sup>, Pál Raczky<sup>2</sup>, Norbert Faragó<sup>3</sup>, Kata Furholt<sup>4</sup>, Dóra Georgina Miklós<sup>5</sup>, András Kalli<sup>6</sup>, Eszter K. Tutkovics<sup>7</sup>, Veronika Szilágyi<sup>8</sup>, György Szakmány<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre, Budapest, Hungary; e-mail: fuzesia@gmail.com; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5039-8593>

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Archaeological Sciences, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5556-723X>

<sup>3</sup> Institute of Archaeological Sciences, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0351-1223>

<sup>4</sup> Christian Albrechts Universität, Kiel, Germany; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3944-9951>

<sup>5</sup> Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre, Hungarian National Museum, National Institute of Archaeology, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1774-8510>

<sup>6</sup> Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre, Hungarian National Museum, National Institute of Archaeology, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0812-7845>

<sup>7</sup> Rétközi Museum, Kisvárd; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7981-8141>

<sup>8</sup> HUN-REN Centre for Energy Research, EKBI Budapest Neutron Centre, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8522-676X>

<sup>9</sup> Dept. of Petrology and Geochemistry, Faculty of Science, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9557-2030>

Stone tools made of various raw materials are characteristic components of Neolithic assemblages. Knapped and polished implements, grinding stones and other toolstones served as multifunctional tools in the toolkit of former households. Different aspects of these artefacts were studied from their raw materials through production techniques to use-wear analysis. However, the contextual approach, considered to be an important part of archaeological investigation, is often neglected in studies mainly carried out by geologists and other specialists. Here we present the assemblages of four settlements from different Neolithic periods. The sites included in the analysis differ not only in their dating, but their types of assemblages and the methods used during the excavations, which also influence analysis and interpretation. The speed of recovery required by mining operations in the almost completely excavated Middle Neolithic settlement of Bükkábrány-Bánya VII stands in stark contrast with the pace of planned excavations in Öcsöd-Kováshalom and Hódmezővásárhely-Kökénydomb, optimised for scientific study. The former site, however, rivals the late Neolithic Polgár-Csőszhalom site in terms of sampling coverage (the number of excavated features), which offers an opportunity for other types of analyses. The presentation aims to test the limits of interpretation, in addition to outlining the possible directions of contextual and spatial analyses, and to present the feasibility of such research with the help of more detailed studies on some assemblages.

### Introduction of the Atlas of Prehistoric Polished Stone Tool Raw Materials in Hungary

Veronika Szilágyi<sup>1</sup>, György Szakmány<sup>2</sup>, Katalin T. Biró<sup>3</sup>, Kata Furholt<sup>4</sup>, Erika Kereskényi<sup>5</sup>, Bálint Péterdi<sup>6</sup>, Tamás Sági<sup>7</sup>, Sándor Józsa<sup>8</sup>, Zoltán Kovács<sup>9</sup>, Máté Biró<sup>10</sup>, Zsolt Kasztovszky<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> HUN-REN Centre for Energy Research EKBI Budapest Neutron Centre, Budapest, Hungary; e-mail: szilagy.i

veronika@ek.hun-ren.hu; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8522-676X>

<sup>2</sup> Dept. of Petrology and Geochemistry, Faculty of Science, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9557-2030>

<sup>3</sup> Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre, Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-6919-3404>

<sup>4</sup> Christian Albrechts Universität, Kiel; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3944-9951>

<sup>5</sup> Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre, Hungarian National Museum, National Institute of Archaeology, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3805-881X>

<sup>6</sup> Supervisory Authority for Regulatory Affairs, Geological Survey, Budapest, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-8474-9518>

<sup>7</sup> Dept. of Petrology and Geochemistry, Faculty of Science, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4664-5472>

<sup>8</sup> Dept. of Petrology and Geochemistry, Faculty of Science, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8219-0044>

<sup>9</sup> HUN-REN Centre for Energy Research Institute of Technical Physics and Materials Science, Budapest, Hungary

<sup>10</sup> Dept. of Mineralogy, Faculty of Science, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-5497-6442>

<sup>11</sup> HUN-REN Centre for Energy Research EKBI Budapest Neutron Centre, Budapest, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5745-8616>

The Atlas of Prehistoric Polished Stone Tool Raw Materials in Hungary was prepared with the support of the ITM NKFI Fund, within the framework of project number K-131814. In our presentation, we present a summary work considered as the most important result of the completed research project. The Atlas is based on a continuously developing database, called “kigyła”, containing both archaeological and geological items (<https://kigyła.hp-soft.hu/#/home>, T. Biró et al. 2021). The compilation is a result of the detailed examination of several thousand archaeological polished stone tools and nearly a hundred geological samples. It contains the rock types occurring as (typical) polished stone tool raw materials in the prehistoric finds of Hungary, and provides a comprehensive interpretation.

The discussion is mostly according to a classical petrological classification, partly based on their frequency in the archaeological record. The petrological classification system of the Atlas – established by György Szakmány (2009) – begins with the most common rock type in the Hungarian assemblages, the contact metabasite (metamorphic rock, more precisely amphibole-rich metabasite). In the following, other amphibole-rich metabasite rock types, then other metamorphites, in order of frequency, are mentioned. The contact metabasites are followed by basalt in importance (belonging to the basic-ultrabasic group of igneous rocks), after which the other basic-ultrabasic, and then the neutral-acidic magmatites are described. At the end of the system, the regionally significant ‘whitestone’ is presented, which can partly be classified as sedimentary rock. Although we mention other, less common rock types for all three major rock groups in the classification system, the Atlas does not include a detailed discussion of those.

This Atlas could not have been created without the dedicated work of many researchers, whose published results are cited as cited articles, while their unpublished results are referenced as manuscripts (BSc, MSc, PhD theses, research reports). The provenance research of polished stone tools would not have been possible without the initial questions, interest and provision of finds by the archaeologists. In addition, we would like to thank many institutions for the care of the collections containing the finds and for the provision of the archaeological objects.

### **Bogács-Vén-hegy – A Multi-period Open-air Archaeological Site in the Bükkalja Region**

Ferenc Cserpák<sup>1</sup>, Attila Péntek<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Independent researcher; e-mail: [cserpakfeca@gmail.com](mailto:cserpakfeca@gmail.com); <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5359-1498>

<sup>2</sup> Independent researcher; <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3471-897X>

We began systematic field surveys in the Hór Valley area in the autumn of 2016. These investigations aimed to identify open-air occurrences of Mousterian industries comparable to those recovered from the nearby Suba-lyuk Cave. The surveys proved successful almost immediately. In addition to several

smaller occupation spots, the sites of Szomolya–Gyűrдемecs and Bogács–Vén-hegy—the focus of the presentation—were discovered. Continuous surface collection has been carried out at these sites, and more recently, research has also been extended to the area around Tard. At Bogács–Vén-hegy, artefacts have been recorded with a handheld GPS device since 2017. Based on these data, artefacts were recovered across an area measuring roughly 500 m by 120 m. The site is currently under arable cultivation. Among the several thousand finds recovered so far, nearly one thousand are stone tools. The Middle Palaeolithic assemblage is represented by two Mousterian facies—the “Typical Mousterian” and the “Quina Mousterian”—both also observed in the Suba-lyuk Cave. The transitional phase between the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic is characterised by bifacial and leaf-point industries, whereas the Early Upper Palaeolithic is primarily represented by Aurignacian facies, including the Proto-Aurignacian. Traces of later prehistoric activity, mainly associated with the “Alföld Linear Pottery Culture”, are also present at the site. The raw material of the knapped stone artefacts is highly varied. Most of the materials could have been obtained within a radius of about 30 km from the site. During the different periods of occupation, the preferred raw material—limnic silicite—was brought from the nearby area of Kács. The raw material source, located roughly 8 km from the site as the crow flies, was first described by the geologist Zoltán Schréter in 1916 and was successfully re-identified in 2017. Other commonly occurring raw materials include metarhyolite, Bükk radiolarite, radiolarian siliceous shale, obsidian, and Egerbakta–Felnémet orthoquartzite. In this presentation, we intend to outline the preliminary results of our research.

## Research in the Szeleta Cave

György Lengyel<sup>1</sup>, Jarosław Wilczyński<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre, Hungarian National Museum, National Institute of Archaeology, Budapest, Hungary; Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Miskolc, Miskolc, Hungary; e-mail: lengyel.gyorgy@hnm.hu; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7803-3043>

<sup>2</sup> Instytut Systematyki i Ewolucji Zwierząt, Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Cracow, Poland; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9786-0693>

The Szeleta Cave is one of the sites of Palaeolithic research in Hungary, from which we know hardly any details regarding the exact chronology of the archaeological layers. Despite more than a century of research, there are still many unanswered questions surrounding the history of human settlement in the cave. In 2024, we launched a new research project to clarify the relative and absolute chronology. Although the research is made more difficult by the currently partly available strata, the preliminary results already provide answers regarding the transitional period between the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic. Thus, we can divide the strata of the cave more precisely than before, both in terms of sedimentology and archaeology.

## Reassessing the upper cultural layer of Jászfelsőszentgyörgy–Szúnyogos

Kristóf István Szegedi<sup>1</sup>, Tibor Marton<sup>2</sup>, György Lengyel<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre, Hungarian National Museum, National Institute of Archaeology, Budapest, Hungary; Faculty of Earth and Environmental Sciences and Engineering, University of Miskolc, Miskolc, Hungary; e-mail: szegedi.kristof@hnm.hu; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7756-2891>

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Archaeology, Research Centre for the Humanities, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3770-2001>

<sup>3</sup> Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre, Hungarian National Museum, National Institute of Archaeology, Budapest, Hungary; Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Miskolc, Miskolc, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7803-3043>

Jászfelsőszentgyörgy–Szúnyogos is one of the few excavated Palaeolithic sites on the Great Hungarian Plain, and it holds particular significance for the study of the region’s Late Upper Palaeolithic. Archaeological finds from the site were partly collected from the surface and partly identified in two separate archaeological layers during excavations carried out by Viola T. Dobosi in the 1990s. She attributed the lower layer to the earlier phase of the Epigravettian and linked it to the ‘Lagerie’ interstadial, while the

upper layer was assigned to a younger phase of the same culture, presumably corresponding to the ‘Lascaux’ interstadial. From the late 1990s onwards, however, the possibility has repeatedly been raised that the upper layer should rather be classified as ‘Epipalaeolithic’. In this interpretation, it would represent a transitional phase between the Late Upper Palaeolithic and the Mesolithic within the Jászság region, alongside other archaeological sites.

To reassess the cultural and chronological position of the upper layer, we present the lithic assemblage, the faunal remains, and the stratigraphic sequence known from the original documentation, supplemented by the results of our 2024 field survey and new radiocarbon dating. Our results reliably date the site to Greenland Stadial-2.1 and attribute it culturally to the Late Epigravettian of eastern Central Europe, with no compelling evidence supporting an ‘Epipalaeolithic’ attribution. Rather than representing the survival of Epigravettian hunter-gatherers into a transitional phase in the Carpathian Basin, the lithic assemblage shows no technological or typological links to the Mesolithic, confirming the observations originally made by Viola T. Dobosi.

### **Late Mesolithic in Southern Transdanubia: new aspects for the evaluation of the Kaposhomok find assemblages**

Tibor Marton<sup>1</sup>, Róbert Kertész<sup>2</sup>, William J. Eichmann<sup>3</sup>, György Lengyel<sup>4</sup>, Kristóf István Szegedi<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Institute of Archaeology, Research Centre for the Humanities, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; e-mail: marton.tibor@abtk.hu; https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3770-2001*

<sup>2</sup> *Damjanich János Museum, Szolnok, Hungary*

<sup>3</sup> *Environmental Resources Management, Wisconsin, USA*

<sup>4</sup> *Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre, Hungarian National Museum, National Institute of Archaeology, Budapest, Hungary; Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Miskolc, Miskolc, Hungary; https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7803-3043*

<sup>5</sup> *Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre, Hungarian National Museum, National Institute of Archaeology, Budapest, Hungary; Faculty of Earth and Environmental Sciences and Engineering, University of Miskolc, Miskolc, Hungary; https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7756-2891*

During archaeological field investigations conducted in the 1950s on a sand dune situated within the Kapos River floodplain, near the boundary of Kaposhomok, a lithic assemblage comprising chipped stone artefacts was recovered. On typological grounds, the assemblage was initially attributed to the Mesolithic period. This attribution holds particular significance, as no evidence of other prehistoric cultures utilising chipped stone technology was identified at the site.

Subsequent re-evaluation of the assemblage corroborated the Mesolithic classification, further refining the chronology to the Late Mesolithic based on the presence of geometric microliths. The original collection has since been augmented with additional chipped stone artefacts, prompting a comprehensive reassessment in light of comparative material from analogous sites located in the Kapos and Koppány river valleys.

All lithic artefacts were manufactured from radiolarite, sourced from the Bakony and Mecsek mountain regions. The typological spectrum includes trapezes, an asymmetrical triangle form, a Sauveterrian-like point, and Montbani-type blades characterised by multiple notches. These tool types exhibit close parallels with the so-called “paracastelnovian” lithic industries of the Western Balkans, suggesting the existence of southward-oriented contact networks during the Late Mesolithic.

### **New research at the Middle Palaeolithic Galgagyörk-Csonkás-hegy site (poster)**

Krisztián Zandler<sup>1</sup>, Attila Péntek<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ferenczy Museum Centre, Szentendre, Hungary; Doctoral School of History, University of Szeged, Szeged, Hungary; e-mail: krisztian.zandler@muzeumicentrum.hu; https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2720-0371*

<sup>2</sup> *Independent researcher; https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3471-897X*

In the Galga Valley, it became known in the 1990s that Paleolithic sites can be found on the hill ranges along both banks of the river. The research was first initiated by Éva Cs. Balogh and Viola T. Dobosi. Systematic field surveys were later carried out by independent researcher Attila Péntek. As a result, numerous Middle and Upper Paleolithic sites and stone tool raw material sources were identified.

The high density of Ice Age sites can be attributed to the wide river valley, rich in water and pasture, which provided a natural passage from the Zagyva to the Becske area. In addition to the migration of prey animals, the availability of stone tool raw materials (limnosilicite, andesite, flint and quartzite pebbles) was also a determining factor for the ancient hunters.

The Csonkás-hegy site was localized by Attila Péntek in 2001. Sondage sampling was carried out in 2008 and 2018 under the leadership of András Markó. At that time, a lithic industry rich in sidescrapers, relying on local limnosilicite and long-distance metaryolite as well as local andesite of less good quality, was excavated.

This year, another small salvage excavation was conducted, as a service road was built right next to the site. During the investigations, the site was delimited in the direction of the main valley and the valley-centre ridge. In the same stratigraphic position, about 70 metres from the previous sondages, the industry, rich in sidescrapers using the same local raw material, was again discovered. In order to get to know the site more precisely, Dr. Erzsébet Horváth (ELTE-TTK) took new sedimentological and OSL samples to clarify the chronological and environmental interpretation of the site.

The Csonkás-hegy site has thus become one of the key loci of Paleolithic research in the Galga Valley.

### Archaeometric investigations on the polished stone tool assemblage of the Late Neolithic Öcsöd-Kováshalom site (poster)

Veronika Szilágyi<sup>1</sup>, Kata Furholt<sup>2</sup>, Zoltán Kovács<sup>3</sup>, Zsolt Kasztovszky<sup>4</sup>, András Füzesi<sup>5</sup>, Pál Raczkó<sup>6</sup>, Máté Biró<sup>7</sup>, Zsófia Farkas<sup>8</sup>, Tamás Sági<sup>9</sup>, Sándor Józsa<sup>10</sup>, György Szakmány<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> HUN-REN Centre for Energy Research EKBI Budapest Neutron Centre, Budapest, Hungary; e-mail: szilagyi.veronika@ek.hun-ren.hu; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8522-676X>

<sup>2</sup> Christian Albrechts Universität, Kiel, Germany; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3944-9951>

<sup>3</sup> HUN-REN Centre for Energy Research Institute of Technical Physics and Materials Science, Budapest, Hungary

<sup>4</sup> HUN-REN Centre for Energy Research, EKBI Budapest Neutron Centre, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5745-8616>

<sup>5</sup> Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre, Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5039-8593>

<sup>6</sup> Institute of Archaeological Sciences, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5556-723X>

<sup>7</sup> Dept. of Mineralogy, Faculty of Science, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-5497-6442>

<sup>8</sup> Dept. of Petrology and Geochemistry, Faculty of Science, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

<sup>9</sup> Dept. of Petrology and Geochemistry, Faculty of Science, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4664-5472>

<sup>10</sup> Dept. of Petrology and Geochemistry, Faculty of Science, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8219-0044>

<sup>11</sup> Dept. of Petrology and Geochemistry, Faculty of Science, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9557-2030>

A total of 193 polished stone tools were excavated between 1980 and 1985 at the Late Neolithic (Tisza culture, turn of the 6th–5th millennium BC, Middle Tisza region) tell-like settlement of Öcsöd-Kováshalom. Our research aimed to identify the raw materials and the provenance of the finds by petrographic and analytical methods (OM, MS, SEM-EDS, PGAA).

The assemblage consists of highly fragmented stone tools, predominantly without perforation (chisels, axes, shoe-last axes), which can be classified into 10 major petrographic types and other lithologies occurring as individual samples. The predominant rock type (40%) is metadolerite-metamicrogabbro, which forms a unified group in terms of its macro- and microscopic petrographic characteristics (colour, texture, mineralogical composition), although MS values fall into three ranges (low, medium, high). The tools may presumably originate from several raw material sources (Szarvaskő, Mureş Valley, possibly the Dinaric-Vardar zone, Szilágyi et al. 2022). Greenschist–amphibolite is the second most common type (16%), representing a petrographically heterogeneous group (grain size, texture, mineral composition) without an exact origin (possibly Western Carpathians) due to its regional distribution and common formation

processes (Szakmány et al. 2018). Contact metabasite and hornfels (11–11% each) are rock types that can be macroscopically identified with high confidence and are common polished stone tool raw materials, characterised by a relatively unified tool form. The metabasites derive from the Krkonoše Jizera Crystalline Complex in the Czech Republic, while the hornfels originates from the Rusca Mts. or the southern part of the Apuseni Mts. Subordinate rock types include acidic–neutral metamagmatite, andesite, basalt, limestone, and sandstone. Among the individual stone tools, quartzite/quartzite schist, skarn, serpentinite, chloritite, nephrite, marble, and metamonzodiorite occur.

Our study confirms the use of both eastern (Apuseni Mts) and northern (Western Carpathians) regional, and long-distance (Krkonoše Jizera Crystalline Complex) raw material supply at Öcsöd-Kováshalom. This diverse polished stone tool assemblage indicates a complex system of relationships in the Middle Tisza region of the Great Hungarian Plain, which lacks primary outcrops and is poor in alluvial gravel.

### **Kup-Egyes: processing workshop of Tevel flint (poster)**

Katalin T. Biró<sup>1</sup>, Judit Regenye<sup>2</sup>, Annamária Bárány<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Közgyűjteményi Központ (ny.); e-mail: [tbk@ace.hu](mailto:tbk@ace.hu); <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-6919-3404>;

<sup>2</sup> Laczkó Dezső Múzeum, Veszprém, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-0236-0294>

<sup>3</sup> ELTE Geographical Museum, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0589-4547>

The prehistoric settlement Kup-Egyes is located near the city of Pápa, N-Central Transdanubia. It was located in 1974. Sándor Mithay, archaeologist, director of the Pápa Municipal Museum (later: Esterházy Károly Castle Museum), used to perform authenticating excavations on the site where he found settlement traces of the Linearbandkeramik and the Lengyel culture. On the initiative of the inhabitants of the municipality, new excavations were performed here between 2000–2003, in collaboration with the Hungarian National Museum and the Laczkó Dezső Múzeum, Veszprém. The pottery is dominated by the Late Neolithic - Early Copper

Age Lengyel culture ceramic, apart from which an abundant quantity of LBK sherds were also found. As a new element in the occupation of the settlement, Middle/Late Copper Age finds associated with the Proto-Boleráz culture were also located. The settlement was excavated by manual methods; the excavation features – pits, ovens, house debris – could be mainly associated with the Lengyel culture. Within the finds, lithic artefacts have an outstanding role, primarily in the chipped stone industry, the procurement and processing of the dominating Upper Cretaceous Tevel flint used to represent an important element in the life of the community. Considerable quantities of animal bone were also found on the site; the exceptional specimens (aurochs, bull and dog skull) were probably related to building offerings. The poster will present the lithic material of the site, its typological and raw material composition. The complete publication of the results of the 2000–2003 excavations will be realised in the 2025 volume of *Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae*.

### **Archaeometric investigation of Late Bronze Age macrolithic finds of metamorphic origin from Csanádpalota –Földvár, SE-Hungary (poster)**

Tamás Sági<sup>1</sup>, Máté Biró<sup>2</sup>, Anna Priskin<sup>3</sup>, Bálint Péterdi<sup>4</sup>, Veronika Szilágyi<sup>5</sup>, Vajk Szeverényi<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dept. of Petrology and Geochemistry, Faculty of Science, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4664-5472>

<sup>2</sup> Dept. of Mineralogy, Faculty of Science, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-5497-6442>

<sup>3</sup> Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Közgyűjteményi Központ, Nemzeti Régészeti Intézet, Budapest, Hungary; e-mail: [priskin.annamaria@hnm.hu](mailto:priskin.annamaria@hnm.hu); <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5046-7747>

<sup>4</sup> Supervisory Authority for Regulatory Affairs, Geological Survey, Budapest, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-8474-9518>

<sup>5</sup> HUN-REN Centre for Energy Research, EKBI Budapest Neutron Centre, Budapest, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8522-676X>

<sup>6</sup> Dept. of Archaeology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Miskolc, Miskolc, Hungary; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0830-8566>

In the last decades a system of large Late Bronze Age fortified settlements was identified in SE-Hungary (Szeverényi et al 2015, Szeverényi et al 2022). The largest fortified settlement of this system is Csanádpalota – Földvár (cca. 460 hectares). In the first excavation period (2011–2013) of the megasite more than 100 features were excavated which dated to the Pre-Gáva (Cruceni-Belegis II) period (middle phase of the Late Bronze Age, cca. 1350–1100 BC). These contained 238 mostly fragmented macrolithic artefacts. A set of archaeological (Priskin, 2022) and petrological (Péterdi et al., 2024, 2025) analyses have already been carried out on this macrolithic material. The artefacts are made of sandstone (42%), quartzite-quartz rich sandstone (15%), micaceous metamorphic rocks (16%), volcanic rocks (14%), granite (5%), limestone (4%) and other materials, e.g. daub (9%). So far only the andesite (Péterdi et al., 2024) and the alkaline basalt (Péterdi et al., 2025) raw materials were studied in detail with petrographic and geochemical/mineral-chemical methods. In this poster we are presenting the preliminary results of our detailed petrographic and mineral-chemical investigations of the basic metamorphic raw materials. We will also try to give a rough estimation of the origin of these raw materials. The project has received funding from the Hungarian National Fund (NKA, Grant Nr. 3234/230, Nr. 207134/306 and Nr. 207134/00383), National Research, Development and Innovation Office (OTKA-FK 135805, and OTKA-K-131814, ADVANCED Research Grant Nr. 150223), and the Wenner-Gren Foundation (Dissertation Fieldwork Grant Nr. 9472).

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