

DISSERTATIONES ARCHAEOLOGICAE

ex Instituto Archaeologico Universitatis de Rolando Eötvös nominatae



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Preliminary report on the excavation at Andornaktálya-Marinka in 2018

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Abstract

Andornaktálya-Marinka is among the several Palaeolithic archaeological sites in the region of Eger, on the foothills of the Bükk Mountains, North-Eastern Hungary. It is situated on the top of a 234 m high elevation located between the villages Andornaktálya and Ostoros. The site was discovered in 2014 by Ferenc Cserpák. Surface collections yielded by several field surveys show two kinds of archaeological material: one is signified mostly by a bifacial-like industry made of quartz porphyry (metarhyolite), while the other one is abundant in blade-like pieces made of Silesian erratic flint. The main aim of the excavation carried out in summer 2018 was to obtain stratigraphic information about the position of the industries, as well as to characterize the quaternary sediments covering the hilltop. The artefacts unearthed in the five trenches occurred in a depth of 60 to 80 cm in a brown chernozem-like layer.

Introduction

The region of Eger belongs to the better-researched ones concerning the Palaeolithic period in Hungary. Apart from the field works and excavations conducted by professional colleagues and institutions, the forefront of the research has been always defined by the dedication and enthusiasm of amateur researchers. This was true during the 1940s, when the first and the most ambiguous site of the region, Eger-Kőporos was discovered by János Dancza and Ferenc Legányi. Legányi, and it was later verified and excavated by László Vértes.¹ During the 1960s and the 1970s, László Fodor has found new locations by field surveys linked to vineyard planting,² and some of them were excavated by László Vértes and Viola T. Dobosi.³ In the 1980s and from the late 1990s onward, the number of recognized sites increased considerably thanks to the systematic prospections of György Salétli as well as Sándor Béres and Krisztián Zandler.⁴ Since 2002, systematic excavations are carried out in the region in the frame of a fruitful

1 VÉRTES 1951.

2 FODOR 1984.

3 DOBOSI 1972; DOBOSI 1976.

4 ZANDLER 2012.

Polish-Hungarian collaboration. Until 2017, Andornaktálya-Zúgó,⁵ Egerszalók-Kővágó,⁶ Eger-Kőporos⁷, and Andornaktálya-Gyilkos⁸ were excavated and published by the team led by Janusz K. Kozłowski and Zsolt Mester. In 2014, Ferenc Cserpák started field surveys in the region and discovered Andornaktálya-Marinka as a completely new site.

The region of Eger belongs to the “Bükkalja” geographic unit that constitutes the southern foothills of the Bükk Mountains, North-Eastern Hungary. Due to its geological history, this mountain and the foothills are rich in sources of knappable siliceous rocks. In 2017, a research project has been launched for studying the lithic resource management dynamics from the Middle Palaeolithic to the Middle Neolithic in Northern Hungary.⁹ The main aim is to study how human groups living in the region managed the exploitation of lithic resources in the changing natural and cultural environment. Based on its raw material composition and on its technological-typological properties, Andornaktálya-Marinka provided a good example for this problematic.

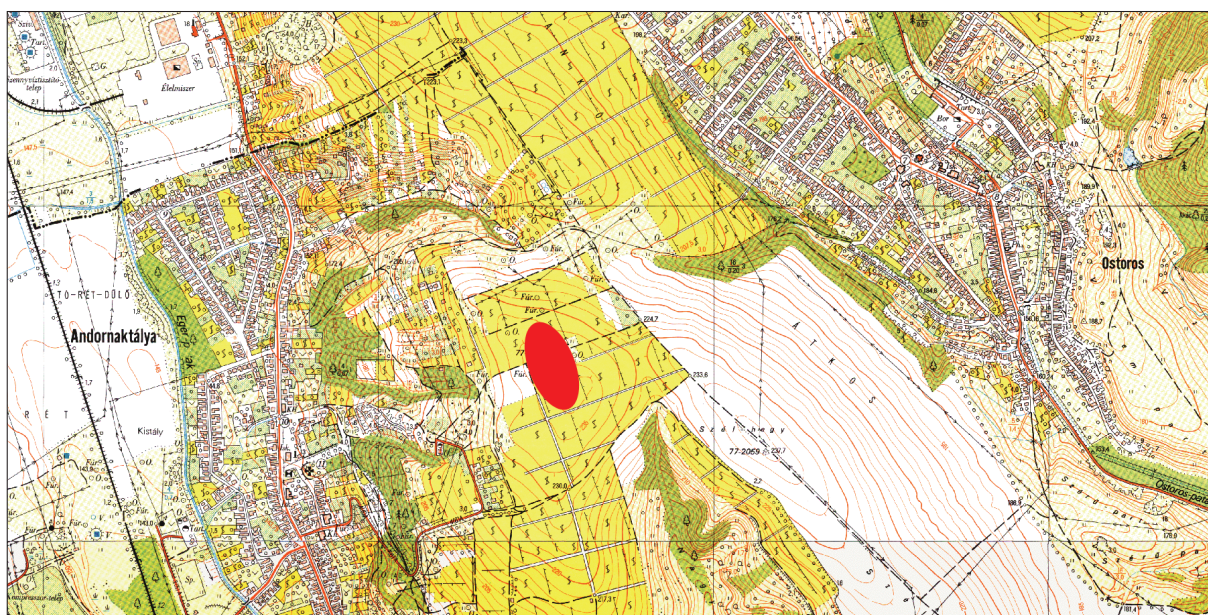


Fig. 1. Location of Andornaktálya-Marinka site on the topographic map.

Site and material

The discovery of the archaeological site and the first field collection can be dated to 2014. It is situated southeast of Eger at a distance of 7 kilometres, on the top of a 234 m high elevation located between the villages Andornaktálya and Ostoros (Fig. 1). A dirt road connecting the two settlements and winding between vineyards also divides the hilltop into two parts called Marinka (northern part) and Parti-szőlők (southern part). According to the results of field surveys, the site also yielded two kinds of archaeological material: one is signified mostly by a bifacial-like industry made of quartz porphyry (metarhyolite), while the other one is

5 KOZŁOWSKI – MESTER 2003–2004.

6 KOZŁOWSKI et al. 2009.

7 KOZŁOWSKI et al. 2012.

8 MESTER 2013; MESTER et al. IN PRESS.

9 National Research, Development and Innovation Fund of Hungary, project K 124334.

abundant in blade-like pieces made of Silesian erratic flint. Several field surveys have been carried out until 2018, which altogether resulted in 1270 pieces of knapped stones. Apart from these only a few undiagnostic ceramic sherds, daub fragments, and a polished stone tool were found at the southern part of the site, which indicates some human activities in a younger prehistoric period too.

Excavation in 2018

The excavation lasted for two weeks between 30th July and 10th August 2018. The main aim was to obtain stratigraphic information about the position of the industries, as well as to characterize the quaternary sediments covering the hilltop. A 5 m wide empty zone running parallel between the dirt road and the edge of the vineyard provided a chance to find an undisturbed situation. Along this zone, three trenches (S1, S2, S3 from west to east) were opened, 2×1 m each and situated at a distance of 15 m from each other (Fig. 2). All of them were excavated to the bottom of the sequence, represented by the weathered layer of the rhyolite tuff of Miocene age reached a depth of about 150 cm. In Trenches S2 and S3 (Fig. 3), the stratigraphy was the same, while the layers were less clearly visible in Trench S1. At the top of the stratigraphy, a 25–35 cm thick ploughing layer was observed suggesting that this zone was never planted by the vineyard. Under this agricultural layer, the sediments seemed to be undisturbed. From top to bottom clayey sediments of different colours succeeded: grey (5–10 cm thick), dark grey (20–25 cm), brownish grey (25–30 cm), and brown (35–50 cm). In the lowermost layer periglacial polygons were recognized.



Fig. 2. The excavation area at the site with Trenches S1–S3 (photo by N. Faragó).

The first artefact came to light in Trench S2 at a depth of 60 cm from the actual surface. Altogether 12 pieces were found in this trench between 60 and 80 cm in depth. Trenches S1 and S3 were poor in finds; some small flakes occurred at the same depth as in Trench S2. For confirming this stratigraphic position of the artefacts, two more trenches were opened: S4 (2×1 m) between S1 and S2 as well as S5 (2×2 m) to the east from S3, in accordance with Ferenc Cserpák's field observations about the distribution of the first finds. Despite the expectations, S4 yielded only two stray pieces, while S5 proved to be the most abundant in lithic finds, among which a characteristic *Keilmesser*-like bifacial tool made of quartz porphyry (metarhyolite) came to light (Fig. 4).



Fig. 3. The stratigraphic sequence of Trench S3 (photo by Zs. Mester).

Altogether 36 pieces were recorded in the five trenches, all of them occurred in a depth of 60 to 80 cm in the brown chernozem-like layer. The archaeological evaluation is still in progress, but according to the preliminary information all but one pieces were made of quartz porphyry (metarhyolite) and have a general Middle Palaeolithic nature. During the excavation Anna Dobos geomorphologist from the Eszterházy Károly University, Eger, Tomasz Kalicki and Marcin Franczek geomorphologists from the Jan Kochanowski University, Kielce Poland, studied the stratigraphic sequences and made samplings for sediment analyses and OSL dating from Trenches S2 and S3. Hopefully, these analyses will contribute to better understand the site formation and the chronological position of the human occupations.

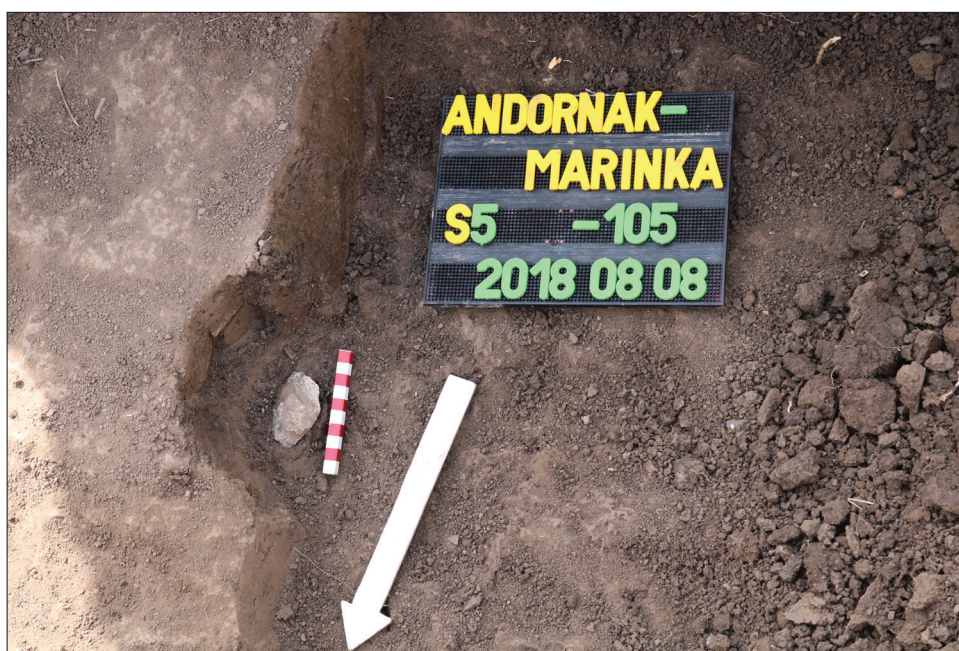


Fig. 4. The *Keilmesser*-like bifacial tool found *in situ* at Trench S5 (photo by N. Faragó).

Conclusion

Andornaktálya-Marinka is among the several Paleolithic archaeological sites in the region of Eger, which are known thanks to the interests of amateur researchers, and which are explored thanks to the collaboration of colleagues coming from different scientific fields and institutions. Although its full evaluation is still in progress, its geographical situation and archaeological material on one side fit well into the wider picture of the Palaeolithic of the region. Since the excavation area overlaps the northern part of the site, the observed stratigraphic position of the artefacts concerns the bifacial industry. Further investigations are needed at the southern part of the site for clarifying the stratigraphic context of the younger industry. Detailed technological and typological analyses will shed light on the archaeological character of this latter.

Acknowledgement

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