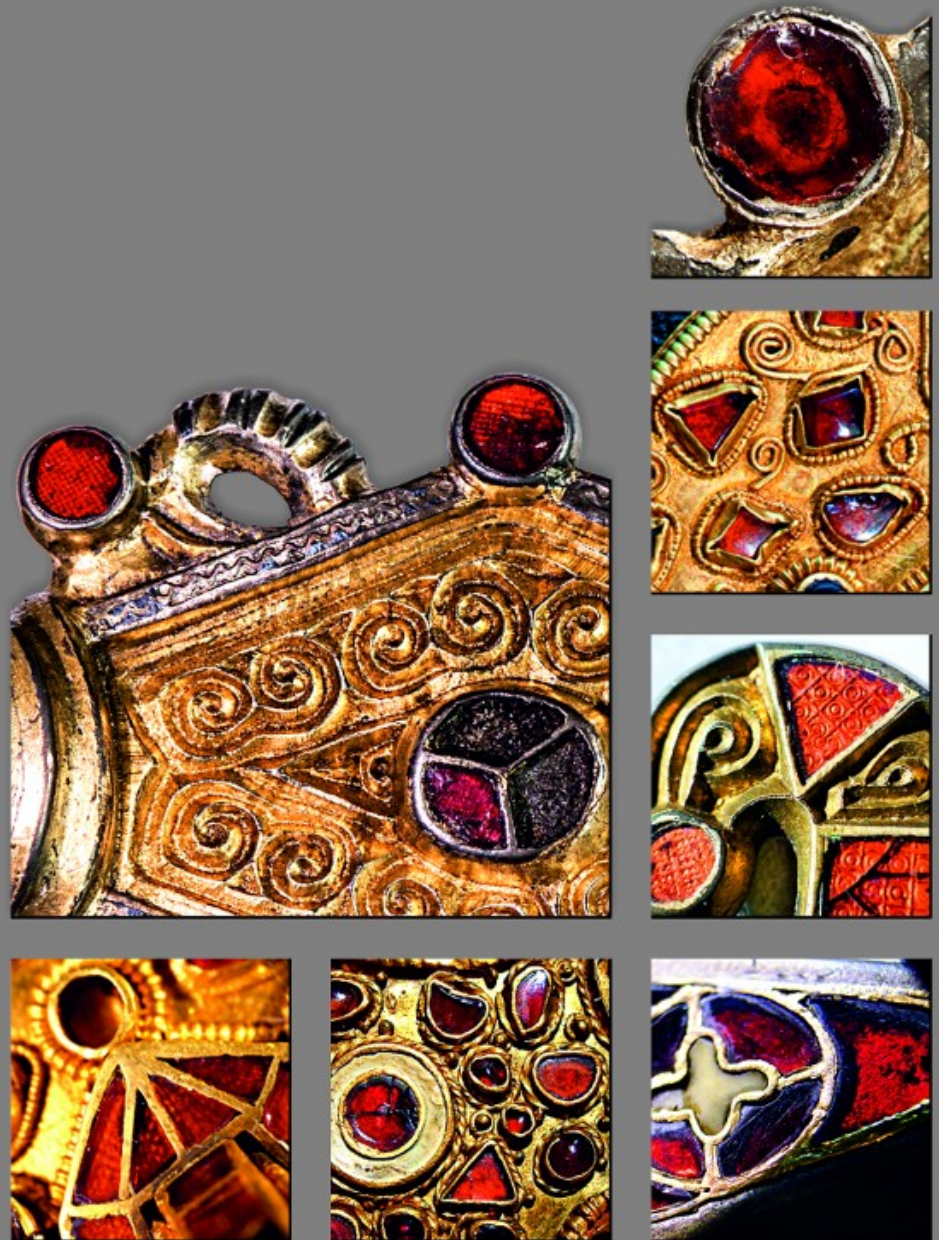


DISSERTATIONES ARCHAEOLOGICAE

ex Instituto Archaeologico Universitatis de Rolando Eötvös nominatae



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Excavation at a new Upper Palaeolithic site of the Eger region (Northern Hungary)

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Abstract

In August 2013, a new site was excavated on the top of Gyilkos Hill at Andornaktálya, near Eger (Northern Hungary). This investigation belongs to a Polish–Hungarian research collaboration in the frame of which four Palaeolithic sites were excavated in the Eger region since 2002. The knapped industry collected at Andornaktálya–Gyilkos site can be attributed to the Early Upper Palaeolithic Aurignacian culture.

Eger and its region are well known by the wines and the historical castle of the town. Although the eponymous tell settlement of the Middle Bronze Age Füzesabony culture is located a few kilometers to the south from Eger, our knowledge on the Prehistory of the region was very restricted until the last fifteen years. This situation changed thanks to the preventive archaeological excavations which unearthed several Neolithic settlements related to the construction of the M3 motorway, such as Füzesabony-Gubakút.¹ Concerning older Prehistoric periods, Palaeolithic research in the first half of the 20th century focused on the caves of the neighbouring Bükk Mountains.² In the foothill area named “Bükkalja” near Eger, only five sites were registered in 1975, three of them were excavated too.³ These sites were considered as belonging to the so-called Eger culture dated to the Mesolithic.⁴ Due to field surveys, the number of discovered sites increased considerably in the next twenty-five years (Fig. 1). In 1984, L. Fodor published hundreds of knapped stone artefacts coming from 11 open-air sites between Demjén and Ostoros villages.⁵ In 2006 in his MA thesis, K. Zandler studied 19 Palaeolithic sites from the same territory.⁶

Since 2002, new excavations were carried out in the frame of a Polish-Hungarian research collaboration. These investigations focused on open-air sites which yielded important lithic assemblages collected on the surface: Andornaktálya-Zúgó⁷ in 2002 and 2004, Egerszalók-Kővágó⁸ in 2006 and Eger-Kőporos⁹ in 2009. The archaeological material from these sites exclusively consists of knapped stone artefacts because bone remains were not preserved. From a stratigraphic point of view, lithic artefacts were found in sediments dated to the Inter-

1 DOMBORÓCZKI 2001; 2003.

2 KADIĆ 1934, 15–83; VÉRTES 1965.

3 DOBOSI 1975, 68–70.

4 Later, the unexistence of this culture was demonstrated by several scholars. For an overview of the problem see KOZŁOWSKI ET AL. 2012, 408–410.

5 FODOR 1984.

6 ZANDLER 2006; 2012.

7 KOZŁOWSKI – MESTER 2003–2004; BUDEK – KALICKI 2003–2004.

8 KOZŁOWSKI ET AL. 2009.

9 KOZŁOWSKI ET AL. 2012.

pleniglacial period (OIS 3) of the last (Weichselian) glacial.¹⁰ Based on technological and typological arguments, the industry of Andornaktálya-Zúgó can be attributed to the Late Aurignacian culture, while assemblages of Egerszalók-Kővágó and of Eger-Kőporos can be associated to several cultural units of the Late Middle and Early Upper Palaeolithic.

Gyilkos-tető is a large hill with east–west orientation, to the east from Andornaktálya village (Fig. 2). According to the field observations by K. Zandler and S. Béres who have surveyed the site, artifacts can be found in the vineyard covering the hilltop. In August 2013, an excavation was undertaken by the Dobó István Castle Museum (Eger) and the Institute of Archaeological Sciences of the Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest), in collaboration with Polish specialists from Jagiellonian University (Kraków) and from Jan Kochanowski University (Kielce). The main goal of the excavation was to clarify the stratigraphic context and the chronological position of the archaeological material. Five small trenches were dug for having a stratigraphic cross-section of the hilltop, and for verifying the position of the artifacts in the sediments (Fig. 3). A similar stratigraphic sequence, 130 cm in thickness, was observed like at the Andornaktálya-Zúgó site nearby:¹¹ the topmost member of the sequence is a ploughing layer (about 50 cm), followed by a brownish sediment (probably buried soil), and the weathering cover of the bedrock at the bottom (Fig. 4). Samples were taken for sedimentological, pedological, and micromorphological analyses, as well as for OSL dating. A radiocarbon dating could also be possible by a charcoal fragment found at the border of the ploughing layer and the undisturbed soil-like sediment (Fig. 5).

Unfortunately, all archaeological material found in the trenches came from the ploughing layer in a depth of between 25 and 50 cm. These pieces fit well into the assemblage collected on the surface. According to K. Zandler,¹² this latter could be attributed to the Aurignacian culture of Early Upper Palaeolithic period. Retouched tools are dominated by end scrapers, mainly on flakes, followed by retouched blades and truncated blades. There are some burins too, as well as side scrapers of Middle Palaeolithic tradition. For tool-making, prehistoric men living at the settlement frequently used different local raw materials (Fig. 6) and limnic quartzites originating from the Tokaj Mountains (Fig. 7). Though they are present in small quantities, extralocal raw materials – such as radiolarites from Western Slovakia, erratic flints from South Poland, and obsidian from Eastern Slovakia – are very important to reconstruct the network of contacts of the local prehistoric human group (Fig. 8).

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¹⁰ BUDEK ET AL. 2013.

¹¹ BUDEK – KALICKI 2003–2004.

¹² ZANDLER 2006, 44–48; 2012, 20.

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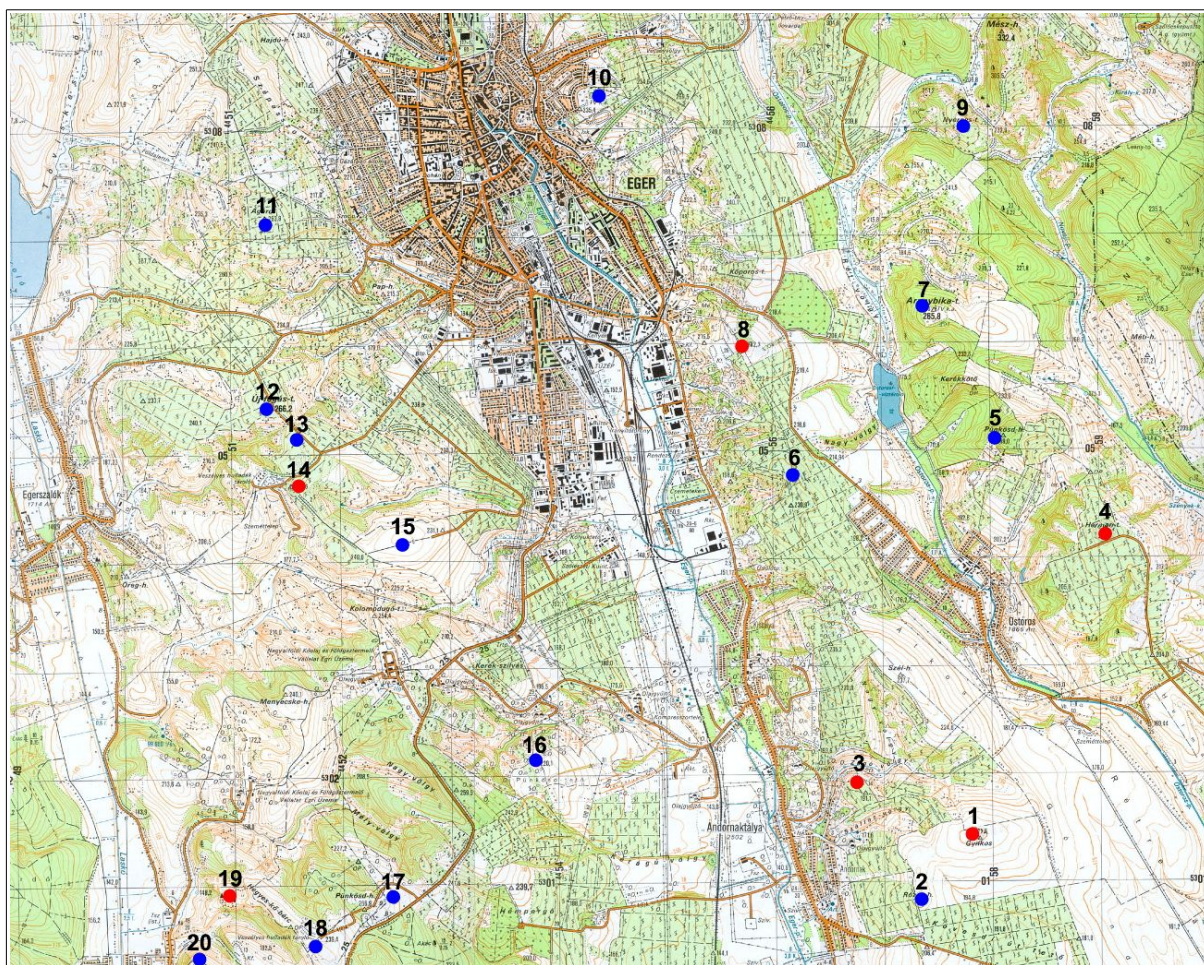


Fig. 1. Palaeolithic sites in the Eger region (red: excavated site; blue: surface finds). 1: Andornaktálya-Gyilkos, 2: Andornaktálya-Rózsahegy, 3: Andornaktálya-Zúgó, 4: Ostoros-Rácpa, 5: Ostoros-Csúnyamunka, 6: Eger-Tihaméri-szőlők, 7: Ostoros-Aranybika, 8: Eger-Kőporos, 9: Eger-Nyerges, 10: Eger-Almagyar, 11: Eger-Agárdi, 12: Egerszalók-Egerlátó, 13: Egerszalók-Kővágó 1, 14: Egerszalók-Kővágó 2, 15: Eger-Nagygalagonyás, 16: Andornaktálya-Szukszerdomb, 17: Demjén-Pünkösdegy, 18: Demjén-Hegyeskötető, 19: Demjén-Hegyeskőbérc, 20: Demjén-Szőlőhegy.

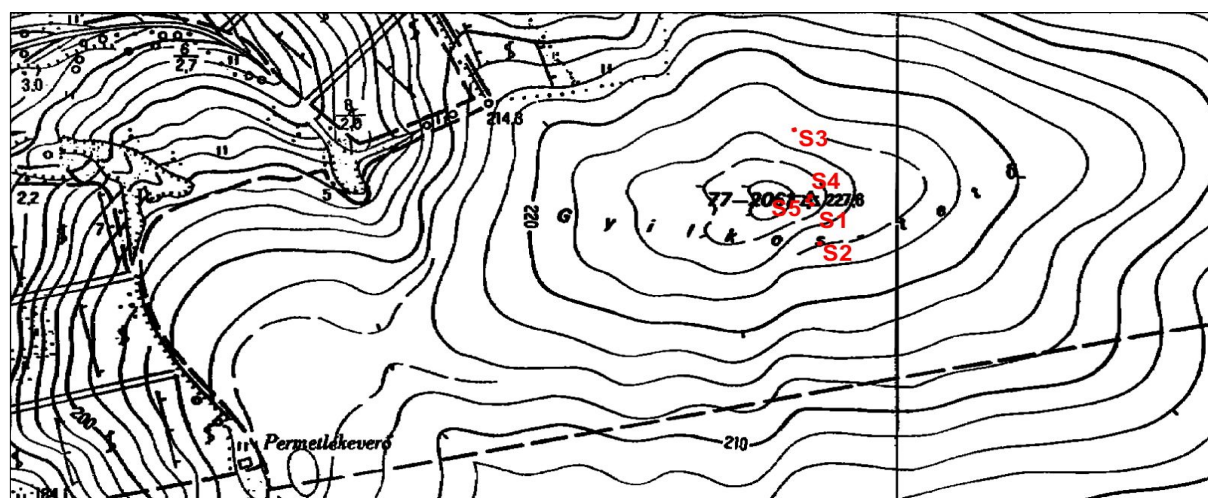


Fig. 2. Location of the hill Gyilkos-tető on the topographic map. The Palaeolithic site lay on the top of the hill. Red dots marked by S1–S5 represent the excavation trenches.



Fig. 3. View to North from the excavated vineyard area with the Bükk Mountains in the background (Photo: N. Faragó).



Fig. 4–5. Stratigraphic sequence of the site on the profile of trench S1 and charcoal fragment at the border of the ploughing layer and the undisturbed sediment in trench S3 (Photos: N. Faragó).



Fig. 6. Artifacts made of local raw materials (Photo: N. Faragó).



Fig. 7. Artifacts made of limnic quartzites from the Tokaj Mountains (Photo: N. Faragó).



Fig. 8. Artifacts made of extralocal raw materials (Photo: N. Faragó).