

The Middle Palaeolithic settlements at the Skalka mound at Hôrka-Ondrej near Poprad (Slovakia)

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Abstract

Settlement from the older phase of the Middle Palaeolithic in Hôrka-Ondrej, Vyšné Ružbachy, Hranovnica and Beharovce was documented by numerous materials, stone tools, and remnants of fire-places. They were assigned to the early Mousterian.

A continuation of the settlement in the middle phase of the Middle Palaeolithic is documented by research in Hôrka-Ondrej, area C and Gánovce. The chipped stone industry belongs to the Taubachian from the last interglacial (Eem), and its authors were pre-Neanderthal, as it was documented by the travertine cast of the scull from Gánovce.¹

A settlement from the younger phase of the Middle Palaeolithic was recovered in area A in Hôrka-Ondrej. An abundant stone industry from different phases of retouch suggests production at the site. Fire-places and bones of hunted animals were recovered from the working area of the camp site.

Evidence of settlement from the older phase of the Middle Palaeolithic through the middle to the younger phase, belonging to the Mousterien, documented by the U/Th dating, and by the results of several analyses and geological observations was obtained at the locality Hôrka-Ondrej.

Topography and research of the locality

The village Hôrka, local part Ondrej, is situated 8 km to the SE from the town Poprad, in a territory which is rich in travertine mounds formed by the mineral springs. Archaeological finds come only from the mound located at the northern edge of the village, immediately at the main road Poprad-Levoča, 635 m above sea level.

This mound is in the literature known under several names, for example: Kameň or Skalka,² Smrečányi rock,³ or also as no name mound.⁴

Travertine mining in the 1930's seriously damaged the travertine mound. Later the mining continued to a smaller extent. F. Prošek, E. Vlček, and V. Ložek carried out research at the mound in 1955–1960 when the quarry was active. Originally they described four overlaying cultural beds with finds of Mousterian chipped stone industry.⁵

¹ VLČEK 1969.

² LOŽEK 1958, 39.; IVAN 1943, 13.; KOVANDA 1971, 171.; KOVANDA 1995, 113.

³ BARTA 1974, 141.; KAMINSKÁ 1988, 74.

⁴ BÁNESZ 1990, 50.

⁵ PROŠEK-LOŽEK 1957, 57., Fig. 7, 8.