

Pebble tools from Tata-Porhanyó

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Owing to the accurate and luckily preserved documentation, the history of the prehistoric site at Tata Porhanyóbánya can be followed from the start of the excavations in 1906. The three major excavation campaigns (Tivadar Kormos, László Vértes, Viola Dobosi and Julianna Cseh) and the intermittent collection of sporadic finds (especially István Skoflek) can be associated most probably with the same settlement unit of the site (the lime tuff basin). The site is an irregular basin of a north-west-south-east orientation measuring 14-15 m along the longer axis. An unevenly cemented pillar connects the underlying and the overlying solid lime tuffs and divides the basin into two asymmetrical parts. Tata was a limited occupation area enclosed from all sides even though it was actually an open-air site. If we accept the idea that lime tuff evolution resulted in identical structures within the same carstic and terrace system even at spots that are 6 km apart, we can compare this site with the settlement features of the Lower Palaeolithic site of Vértesszőlős. The extension, ground surface and the height of the walls of the two basins, which developed in two chronologically distant periods (Mindel and Riss/Würm), significantly surpass the measurements of the basins that are being built at present (e.g. Egerszalók, Szalajka valley). It is certain that series of basins flanked the rims of the terraces along the Általér and a number of these basins proved to have been inhabited at Vértesszőlős, while no authentic data attest to the same at Tata. It means that although the relics of the basins can be identified at several places yet the traces of human settlements are as yet missing. Perhaps the archaeological material, which was collected in different regions of the large quarry and classified as stray finds, should be considered to have come from the original provenance. The walls of the basins were of various heights at Vértesszőlős. At least one side of the basin at site I, the wall was higher than 2 m, while it was barely 1 m at site III and at Tata. Diversions in the temperature and precipitation in the two geological periods can explain the difference in the length and the intensity of lime tuff deposition. All the excavations and authentic collections can be associated with the same basin: the part of the quarry that lied the closest to the secondary school and where there was no extraction. Beside the finds collected from undetermined locations, the material collected from the collapsed walls of the lime tuff basin was also considered as stray finds. The baulk that László Vértes had left at the site was strongly damaged by the fluctuation of the temperature and the rummaging of "treasure hunters".

It is significant to note from the respect of the interpretation of the archaeological phenomena that only a surface of 1 square metre was found at the time of the last excavation campaign, which corresponded to the criteria of a culture-bearing layer in a conventional archaeological sense. The finds did not come from a horizontal settlement layer, they could be associated with a sediment of a vertical dimension.