

# Tata - Porhanyóbánya, Middle Palaeolithic Settlement

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The mythically long research history of the Tata - Porhanyóbánya site is a unique phenomenon in the Palaeolithic both in Hungary and abroad. There are very few sites all over the world that can boast of a scientific report from before the "discovery" of Palaeolithic. The scientific career and the actual fate of the site, however, ran in diverse ways.

Tivadar Kormos's excavation and the publication of the site in 1909 established the scientific reputation of the site, while László Vértes's excavation in 1958-59 and the monograph publication, which won the prize of the Academy in 1964, put the crown on it.

The latest series of the excavations started in 1995 when the Tata-Porhanyóbánya site was included into the program of an excursion to Palaeolithic sites during the international INQUA Congress. Although the excursion did not take place, the preparatory works turned into excavations conducted in five subsequent years. The Kuny Domokos Museum and the Directorate of the Museums of Komárom-Esztergom County provided the intellectual background and the Self-Government of Tata, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and the Eötvös József secondary school offered the financial support.

The new results partly corroborate and partly complete what we have known so far. Since the appearance of the monograph in 1964, the most significant result was a new absolute date. According to the date that is accepted to date, the site can be placed to the very end of the R/W interglacial, the 5a oxygen isotope stage, that is about 100 thousand years in an absolute age.

Several factors that appear as an advantage even to date could contribute to the choice of the site. The proximity of water, the tempering effect of hot water springs of 20-25 degrees and the recognition of the hunting opportunities hiding in the varied stock of game of the different ecological niches could be the decisive factors. This was completed by the proximity of raw material sources. The calculated maximum 19 degrees July mean temperature could not any more secure the abundance of the interglacial optimum, but nor did the significant climatic changes of the approaching glacial period yet influence have an effect on the community that lived here.

The flaked stone artefacts were made from chert and quartzite pebbles, which explains why they are small and thick. The proportion of blade-like flakes and blanks does not reach 10 %. The Middle Palaeolithic pebble industries are concentrated in a wide Central European zone. This raw material acquisition strategy and stone tool production technology is probably rooted in a strong Lower Palaeolithic industry the traces of which can be found scattered all over Europe, and from which the varied pebble industries of the Middle Palaeolithic evolved after a long development.