

SPIŠSKÉ PODHRADIE-DREVENÍK, AN IMPORTANT PALAEOLITHIC SITE OF THE LOWER SPIŠ¹

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Abstract: This paper presents analysis of the chipped stone industry from the upland settlement in Spišské Podhradie-Dreveník. The site has been devastated by the exploitation of travertine. The survey yielded 33 artefacts which can be dated to the beginning of the Upper Palaeolithic (Szeletian, Aurignacian), the Late Palaeolithic or the Mesolithic. Two bifacially retouched points and a combined endscraper/burin tool made of radiolarite can be dated to the Szeletian. As for raw materials, radiolarite prevails over patinated silicite and chocolate flint.

INTRODUCTION

Intense occupancy from different stages of the Palaeolithic has been recorded in the territory of Spiš, especially in the Poprad River basin in the Upper Spiš region. On the contrary, fewer Palaeolithic sites have been recorded in the Lower Spiš region along the Hornád River basin. It can be assumed that this disproportion is caused by poor state of the research and partially also by insufficient publishing of older finds (Žaár 2015, 174).

By presenting the finds from the site of Spišské Podhradie-Dreveník (from now on referred to as Dreveník), this paper aims to shed more light into the Palaeolithic of the sub-Tatran region. Dreveník is an important polycultural hilltop settlement (comprising of open-air settlements as well as traces of local cave settlements) with dominating Eneolithic (Baden culture) and protohistoric elements (e.g. Javorský 1999; Soják 2001). Only few traces of the Palaeolithic occupancy are reported from this site (see below).

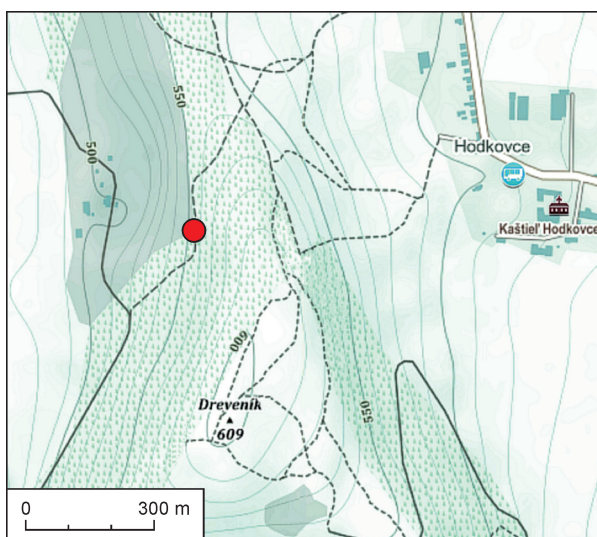


Fig. 1. Location of the site on the map.

LOCATION OF THE SITE

The travertine open-air site complex of Dreveník is located in the eastern part of the Hornád River basin, south of the popular Spiš Castle. The cadastral border between the town of Spišské Podhradie (western part) and the village of Žehra (eastern part) runs through the centre of the site. Dreveník is situated at 600 m a.s.l., on the western slope of the north-western elevation at Žehra, above a still active quarry (Fig. 1).

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Fig. 2. Northern view of the destroyed part of the Palaeolithic site.

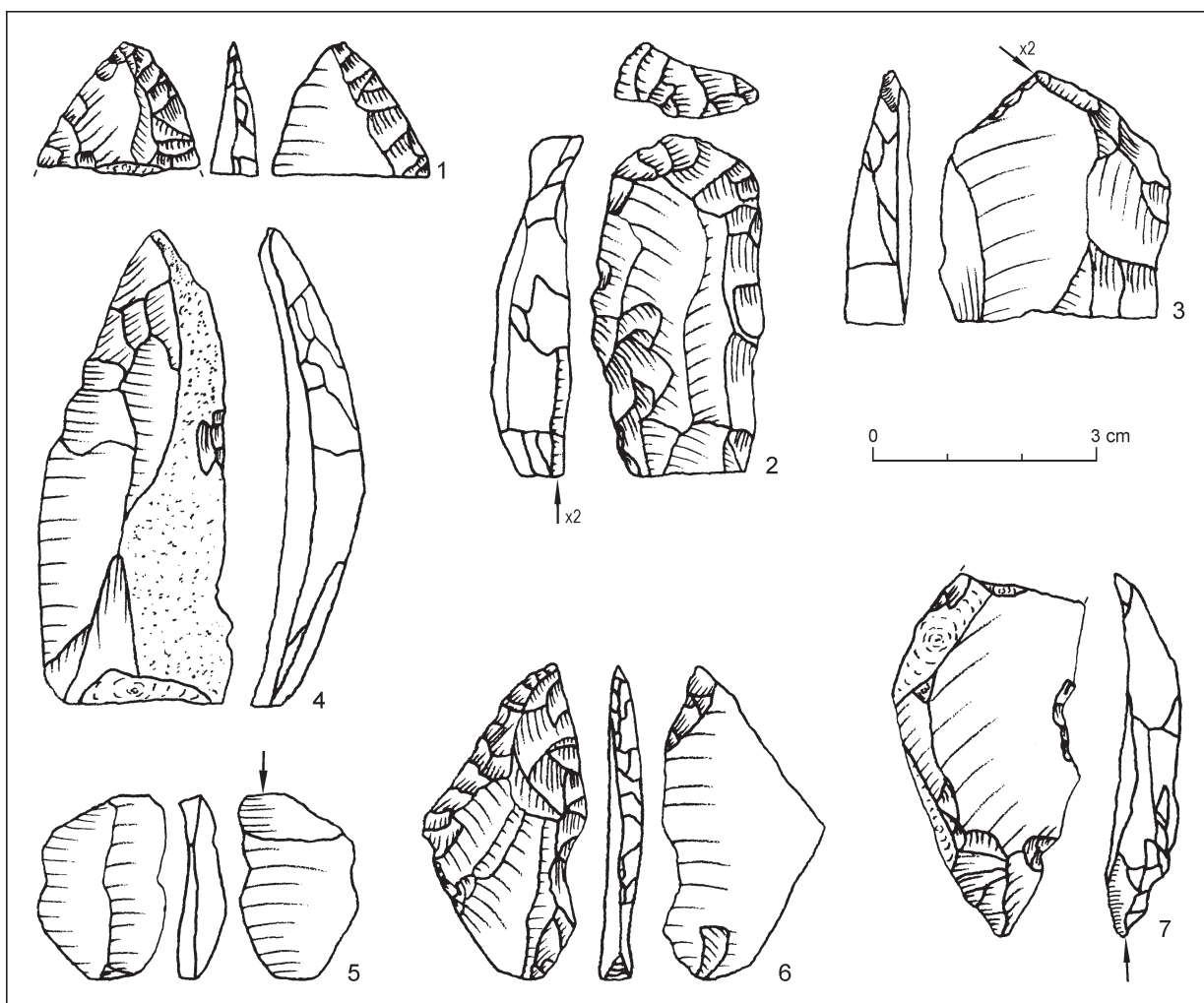


Fig. 3. Chipped stone industry from the Early Upper Palaeolithic. 1, 2, 6, 7 – radiolarite; 3–5 – patinated silicite.

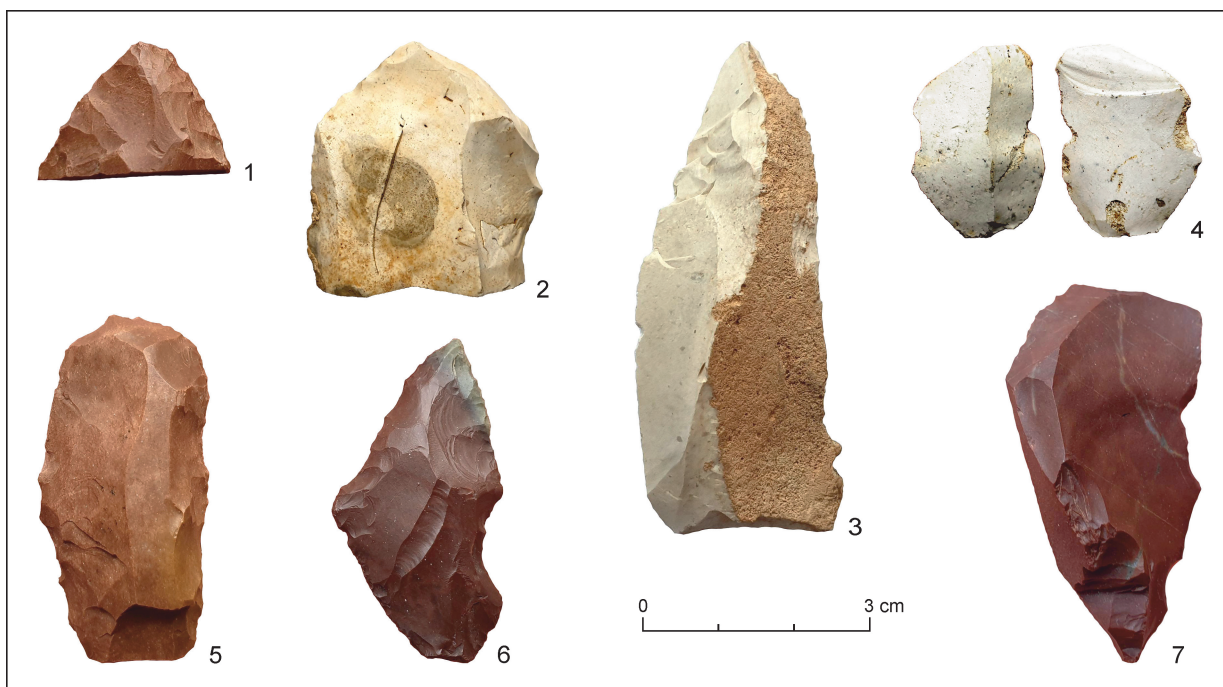


Fig. 4. Photographic documentation of the chipped stone industry from the Early Upper Palaeolithic. 1, 5–7 – radiolarite; 2–4 – patinated silicite.

Intense exploitation of travertine at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries resulted in continuous destruction of the site, from which the analysed chipped lithic assemblage was obtained during several surveys performed in 1989 (M. Soják and his father O. Soják). The items come exclusively from Dreveník, and no other deposits were found in the vicinity (Fig. 2).

DESCRIPTION OF ARTEFACTS

33 analysed chipped stone artefacts come from the surveys of M. Soják. They can be classified into three chronological horizons. The dimensions of the artefacts are listed as follows: length x width x thickness.

Early Upper Palaeolithic

1. Leaf point – distal fragment; from a uniplatform core; bifacially retouched distal part, full retouch on both sides; dusky red radiolarite; 18 x 21 x 6 mm (Fig. 3: 1; 4: 1).
2. Combined tool – endscraper/burin; fragment of a regular blade with a broken base from a uniplatform core; head with semi-abrupt and abrupt retouch, with abruptly dorsally retouched right and semi-abruptly and abruptly retouched left edges; two burin percussions on the base of the right side; dusky red radiolarite; 46 x 23 x 11 mm (Fig. 3: 2; 4: 5).
3. Burin – central, lateral; distal flake fragment; from a uniplatform core; two burin percussions on the right side and multi-directional negatives of chipping on the dorsal side; patinated silicite; 33 x 31 x 9 mm (Fig. 3: 3; 4: 2).
4. Blade – distal fragment; from a bipolar core; partly preserved smooth cortex; patinated flint; 64 x 24 x 10 mm (Fig. 3: 4; 4: 3).
5. Blade – flat burin (?); proximal fragment; from a bipolar core; patinated silicite; 25 x 17 x 6 mm (Fig. 3: 5; 4: 4).
6. Truncation (notched point) – from a uniplatform core; full and semi-abrupt retouch on the dorsal side and partial retouch of ventral side; red-green radiolarite; 43 x 21 x 4 mm (Fig. 3: 6; 4: 6).
7. Burin – proximal fragment of the crested blade of the first stage of preparation; burin percussions on the left side; partial dorsal retouch with an indistinct notch on the right side; red radiolarite; 49 x 25 x 9 mm (Fig. 3: 7; 4: 7).

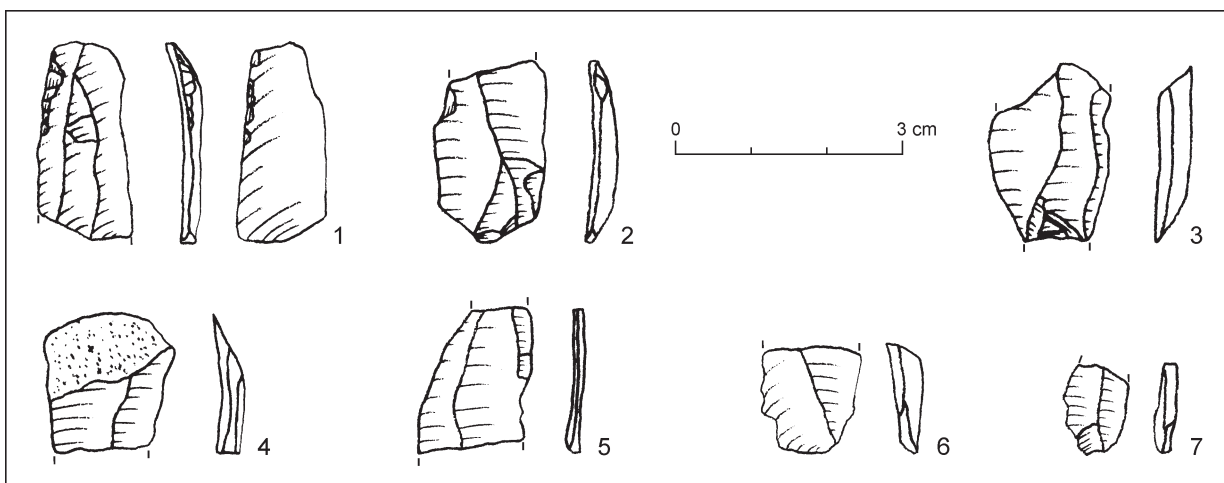


Fig. 5. Chipped stone industry from the Late Palaeolithic or the Mesolithic. 1, 2, 5–7 – radiolarite; 3, 4 – chocolate flint.

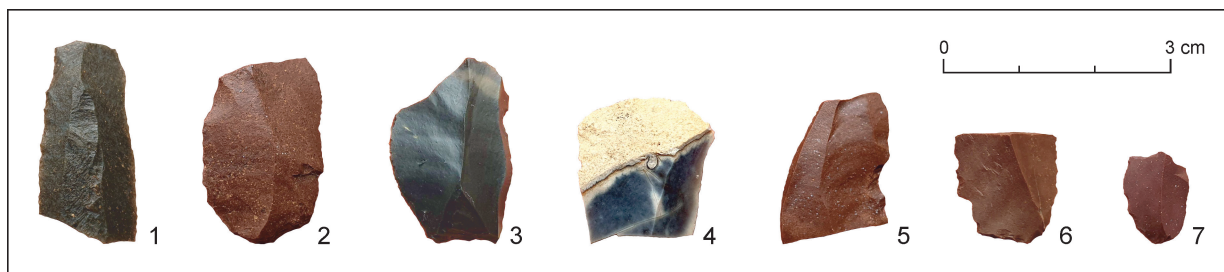


Fig. 6. Photographic documentation of the chipped stone industry from the Late Palaeolithic or the Mesolithic. 1, 2, 5–7 – radiolarite; 3, 4 – chocolate flint.

Late Palaeolithic/Mesolithic

1. Blade – with broken proximal part; from a uniplatform core; partial fine ventral retouch of the right side and partial dorsal retouch of the left side; dark green radiolarite; 26 x 13 x 3 mm (Fig. 5: 1; 6: 1).
2. Blade – proximal part; red radiolarite; 24 x 14 x 4 mm (Fig. 5: 2; 6: 2).
3. Blade – mesial part; dark chocolate flint; 24 x 16 x 4 mm (Fig. 5: 3; 6: 3).
4. Blade – distal part with smooth cortex; from a uniplatform core; chocolate flint with partial fine patina; 18 x 17 x 3 mm (Fig. 5: 4; 6: 4).
5. Blade – mesial part; red radiolarite; 19 x 14 x 2 mm (Fig. 5: 5; 6: 5).
6. Blade – proximal part; red radiolarite; 12 x 8 x 3 mm (Fig. 5: 7; 6: 7).

Prehistory (Palaeolithic?)

1. Blade – distal part; patinated silicite; 28 x 16 x 4 mm (Fig. 7: 1).
2. Flake – fragment of a crested blade of the first stage of preparation; dusky red-green radiolarite; 30 x 14 x 7 mm (Fig. 7: 2).
3. Blade – mesial part; from a uniplatform core; finely burned red radiolarite; 17 x 17 x 5 mm (Fig. 7: 3).
4. Flake – flat; dusky red radiolarite; 38 x 25 x 2 mm (Fig. 7: 4).
5. Flake – dusky red radiolarite; 20 x 19 x 7 mm (Fig. 7: 5).
6. Flake – red radiolarite; 20 x 35 x 4 mm (Fig. 7: 6).
7. Blade – mesial part; from a uniplatform core; burned silicite; 27 x 18 x 4 mm (Fig. 7: 7).
8. Flake – fragment; grey-green radiolarite; 31 x 15 x 5 mm (Fig. 7: 8).
9. Flake – fragment; creamy-grey radiolarite; 9 x 14 x 4 mm (Fig. 7: 9).
10. Small flake – fragment; grey-green radiolarite; 9 x 12 x 2 mm (Fig. 7: 10).
11. Flake – red radiolarite; 15 x 10 x 2 mm (Fig. 7: 11).

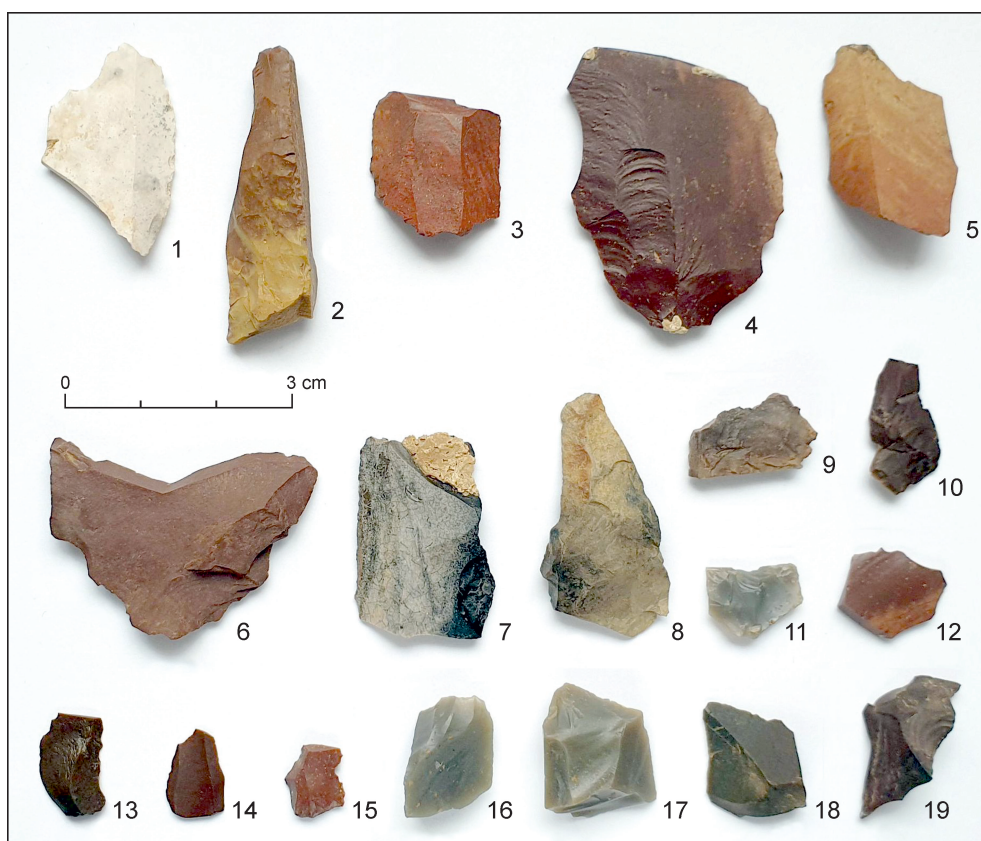


Fig. 7. Photographic documentation of indistinct chipped stone industry from prehistory (Palaeolithic?). 1 – patinated silicite; 2–5, 7–19 – radiolarite; 6 – burned silicite.

12. Flake – fragment; red radiolarite; 11 x 14 x 2 mm (Fig. 7: 12).
13. Flake – red radiolarite; 14 x 8 x 2 mm (Fig. 7: 13).
14. Flake or blade – distal part; from a double-platform core; red radiolarite; 11 x 7 x 1 mm (Fig. 7: 14).
15. Microflake – red radiolarite; 10 x 7 x 2 mm (Fig. 7: 15).
16. Chunk – grey-green radiolarite; 15 x 11 x 7 mm (Fig. 7: 16).
17. Chunk – grey-green radiolarite; 18 x 15 x 8 mm (Fig. 7: 17).
18. Flake – green-brown radiolarite; 13 x 15 x 7 mm (Fig. 7: 18).
19. Flake – fragment; brown-red radiolarite; 9 x 21 x 7 mm (Fig. 7: 19).

ANALYSIS OF FINDS

The presented collection of chipped stone industry from the site of Dreveník includes 33 artefacts from several chronological horizons. They are dated to the Upper Palaeolithic, and possibly also to the Mesolithic (?).

Early Upper Palaeolithic

Seven artefacts can be dated to this period. As regards the type of raw material, radiolarite and unidentified patinated silicite are present. Being a sedimentary rock of organogenic origin, radiolarite can be assumed to originate in the Klippen Belt, most probably in the territory of the Pieniny Mountains situated about 35 km north of the site (*Kaminská 2014a*, fig. 2; *Valde-Nowak/Kerneder-Gubała 2019*, 160 ff.). Silicites covered with white patina probably come from the area of the outcrops in the Kraków – Częstochowa Upland, situated about 140 km north-west of the site (*Kaczanowska/Kozłowski 1976*).

From the typological point of view, the artefacts might be associated with the Szeletian culture, indicate, e.g., by a fragment of a broken bifacially retouched point (Fig. 3: 1; 4: 1). Such points are quite common, for instance, in the vicinity of Moravany nad Váhom (*Kaminská et al. 2008*, 189, fig. 7: 4; *Nemergut 2010*, 199, pl. VI: 1–6). The combined endscraper/burin tool (Fig. 3: 2; 4: 5) have been found at several Central European sites of the Szeletian culture (*Kaminská et al. 2017*, 45, fig. 2: 3; *Kowalski 1969*, pl. II: 2; *Kozłowski/Kozłowski 1977*, 110, pl. 24: 17; *Nemergut 2010*, 196, pl. III: 4; *Škrdlá et al. 2014*, 98, fig. 12: 16; *Valoch 1993*, fig. 17: 4, 5), but also at the sites associated with the Aurignacian culture (*Bánesz 1960a*, fig. 6: 11; *Kaminská 2014b*, 167, fig. 71: 9; *Kozłowski/Kozłowski 1977*, 120, pl. 26: 2; *Sachse-Kozłowska/Kozłowski 1975*, pl. 6: 1). A flake burin similar to the one from Dreveník (Fig. 3: 3; 4: 2) was discovered in the Obłazowa Cave, Poland (*Valde-Nowak 2003*, 46, fig. 27: 11). Bifacially retouched blade is a typologically well-defined artefact (Fig. 3: 6; 4: 6). This type of tool has a clear analogy in the Szeletian culture at the site of Moravany nad Váhom-Dlhá (*Kaminská et al. 2017*, 46, fig. 3: 4; *Nemergut 2010*, 198, pl. V: 7).

The flat burin made of basal part of a blade, from a double-platform core, is an interesting artefact (Fig. 3: 5; 4: 4). Analogies can be found in Szeletian culture as well as in Aurignacian collections of chipped stone industry. In the former culture, there is a certain similarity with a flat burin from the Polish site of Dzierżysław 1 (*Kozłowski/Kozłowski 1977*, 110, pl. 24: 11) or those found at some Slovak sites, for instance, at Moravany nad Váhom-Dlhá (*Nemergut 2010*, 201, pl. VIII: 11). On the contrary, Barca II near Košice (Slovakia) can be mentioned as an example of a site with more frequent occurrence of such artefacts in the Aurignacian cultural context (*Bánesz 1968*, 165, fig. 45: 15). Additionally, items from Nowa Biała 2, the cave in Obłazowa Rock in Poland (*Valde-Nowak 2003*, 62, fig. 39: 1) and the recent find from Štrba (*Soják 2015*, 154 f., fig. 4: 6) can be mentioned. The cultural affiliation of the two incomplete blades has not been yet determined (Fig. 3: 4, 7; 4: 3, 7), although their dating to the Aurignacian is very probable (e.g. *Bánesz 1968*, 150, fig. 34; *Kaminská 2014b*, 174, fig. 76: 22–27). Hypothetically, based on the state of preservation distinct white patina and partial retouch (Fig. 3: 7; 4: 7), the other two fragments (the blade and the flake) could potentially be dated to the Upper Palaeolithic (?; Fig. 7: 1, 2).

Late Palaeolithic/Mesolithic

Most probably, seven artefacts can be dated to this chronological horizon. Red radiolarite prevails, even though one specimen is of dark green colour. The nearest primary sources are located – similarly to the radiolarite artefacts from the earlier stage of the Upper Palaeolithic – in the Klippen Belt of the Pieniny Mountains (see above).

Two artefacts are made of chocolate flint, one is made of its distinctly dark type. Exploitation sites of chocolate flint are located mainly in the Świętokrzyskie Mountains in Poland and their surroundings, about 200 km north of Dreveník (*Budziszewski 2008*, 47; *Schild 1971*). However, deposits of this type of flint can also be found in the northern part of the Kraków – Częstochowa Jura in Poland (*Sudoł-Procyk et al. 2018*), also about 200 km north of the studied site.

Only one complete tool from this chronological phase has been identified among the analysed artefacts – a partially retouched blade with a broken base (Fig. 5: 1; 6: 1). Other six artefacts represent fragments of various parts of blades, some of them microlithic. Dating to the identified chronological stage is thus problematic and it seems that the six fragments could alternatively be dated to the Late Palaeolithic or the Mesolithic (*Bárta 1965*, pl. LXIII: 15–21; LXIV: 3–9; *Kaminská/Javorský 1996*, fig. 3; *Soják 2002*, fig. 3: 3; 4: 2, 10; 5: 1; 6: 1–3; *Svoboda et al. 2017*, 134, fig. 3.8: 3–8).

Prehistory (Palaeolithic?)

The majority of the chipped artefacts from Dreveník do not bear any distinct typological features. As mentioned above, two artefacts could belong to the Early Upper Palaeolithic. The remaining prehistoric artefacts, identified as flakes and fragments of blades, might represent the Late Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, or even later prehistoric periods, e.g., the Eneolithic (*Javorský 1999; Soják 2001*).

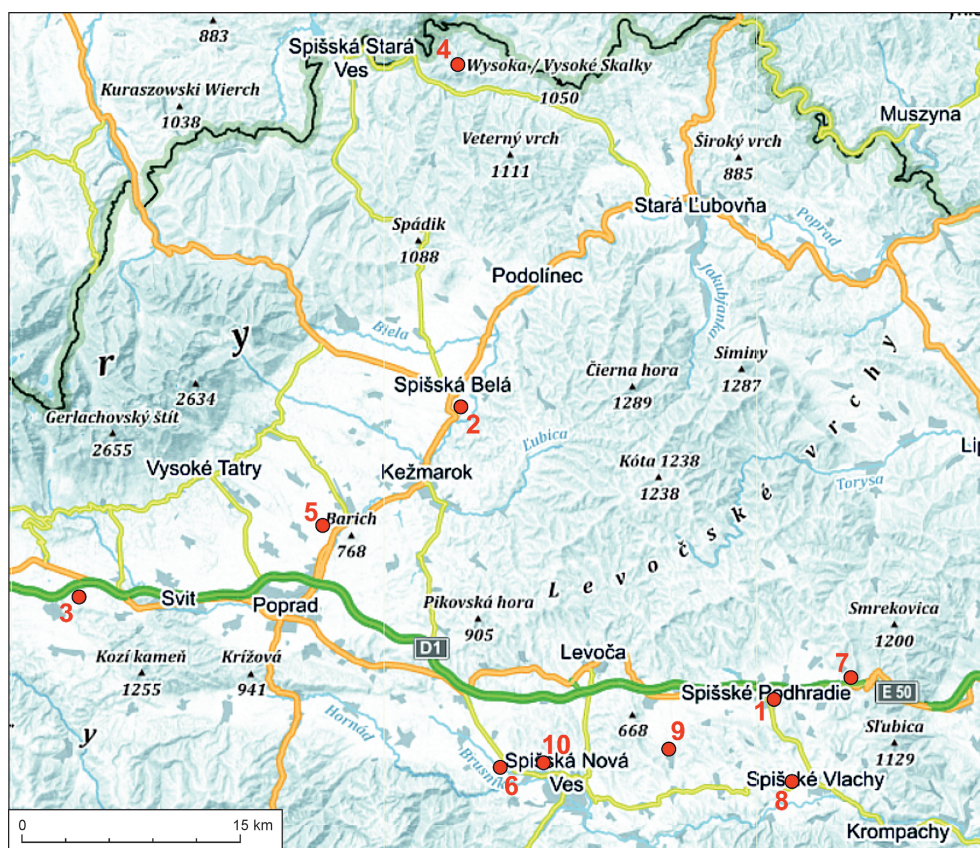


Fig. 8. Map of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic sites in the Spiš region mentioned in the article. 1 – Spišské Podhradie-Dreveník; 2 – Spišská Belá; 3 – Štrba; 4 – Haligovce; 5 – Poprad-Matejovce; 6 – Smižany; 7 – Beharovce; 8 – Spišské Vlachy; 9 – Domaňovce; 10 – Smižany/Spišská Nová Ves.

SETTLEMENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE LOWER SPIŠ REGION FROM THE EARLY UPPER PALAEOLOGIC AND LATE PALAEOLOGIC TO THE MESOLITHIC

Based on the finds, only few sites in the Lower Spiš region can be dated to the Upper Palaeolithic. Until now, no archaeological finds of the Szeletian culture were discovered in this region. Except for the finds from Spišská Belá (Fig. 8: 2; *Soják 2006*, 28 f.), Štrba (Fig. 8: 3; *Soják 2015*, 144 ff.), Spišské Podhradie-Dreveník (Fig. 8: 1; *Báñez 1981*, 191, fig. 2: upper left), and other allegedly Aurignacian sites (Fig. 8: 4, 5; Haligovce-Aksamitka and Poprad-Matejovce), there are no indications of occupancy in the region in the Early Upper Palaeolithic.

A formerly discovered fragment of a leaf point from Spišské Podhradie-Dreveník has been recently dated to the Middle Palaeolithic, corresponding with the Mousterian (*Kaminská 2014c*, 115). However, the site was associated with this culture based on a single artefact. Yet, with regard to the finds presented in this paper, it seems that the site of Dreveník should rather be dated to Early Upper Palaeolithic (Szeletian with Aurignacian admixture), as suggested by the former chronological concept. Unfortunately, no further fieldwork is possible at the site due to the exploitation of travertine and complete devastation of the site.

Travertine complex of Dreveník is located between the clusters of Szeletian sites situated in South-Western and Eastern Slovakia, the nearest sites being recorded in the vicinity of Veľký Šariš (*Báñez 1960b*, 313 ff.; *Kaminská et al. 2017*, 49, fig. 5). Since Dreveník is a destroyed site, Aurignacian origin of the site with admixture of Szeletian leaf points cannot be excluded, similarly to the typical site at Kechneč (*Báñez 1959*).

Late Palaeolithic sites are not numerous in Eastern Slovakia, especially in the Lower Spiš region, where – unlike in the case of the Upper Spiš region (Soják 2002, more references here) – Late Palaeolithic occupancy are rather scarce. There are few vaguely dated finds from several sites; in addition to those, the site of Hradisko I near Smižany (Fig. 8: 6), dated to the Late Palaeolithic, is the most significant site from the period, and is believed to have been a seasonal hunting settlement (Kaminská/Javorský 1996), even though some artefacts could potentially be dated to the Mesolithic. Another certainly Late Palaeolithic site, comprising also of workshops, was discovered in Beharovce (Fig. 8: 7), where an accumulation of radiolarite artefacts was discovered in a sunken feature/object (Soják 2000a, 111). Similar finds, collected from the surface, come from the site of Spišské Vlchy-Plantal (Fig. 8: 8), where an arch-backed point typical for the Federmesser culture was the most distinct from the obtained artefacts (Soják 2015, 148 f.). Multiple Late Palaeolithic finds collected in the Hornád River basin (near Spišské Podhradie; Soják 2011, 12) indicate that the occupancy of the region was much denser in this period than previously assumed.

As far as Mesolithic occupancy of the Spiš region is concerned, even fewer sites are known. A recognised site, unfortunately studied only during short surveys, is situated in Spišské Vlchy-Plantal (Soják 2015, 148 f.). In addition, it is possible that some of the microlithic industry from Beharovce dates to the Mesolithic (Soják 2011, 13). Some of the isolated finds come from several sites in the above-mentioned part of the Spiš region, e.g., the sites in the area of Domaňovce (Fig. 8: 9; Furman/Soják 2008, 17 f.), from the border area between Smižany and Spišská Nová Ves (Fig. 8: 10; Soják 2000b, 182 f.), or from Žehra-Hlinky I (unpublished collections of M. Soják).

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysed chipped stone industry from Dreveník, the site seems to have been a very important polycultural site. The analysis of the artefacts points to the presence of cultures dated to the Early Upper Palaeolithic (Szeletian, Aurignacian; Fig. 3), as suggested mainly by the finds of leaf points, truncation and the combined tool (endscraper/burin). Considering contemporary state of the research, it cannot be definitely decided if the site was an independent camp of the Szeletian culture, later settled by the folk of the Aurignacian culture, or if the finds represent an Aurignacian site with Szeletian admixture. The following stage of prehistoric occupancy currently seems to be represented by yet-unidentified Late Palaeolithic or Mesolithic groups of hunters and gatherers (Fig. 5). Unfortunately, continuous exploitation of travertine at Dreveník has destroyed the site completely, with no possibility of revising archaeological excavation. In the light of these circumstances, the few presented finds can be considered an important contribution to the topic of Palaeolithic (and Mesolithic) occupancy of this part of Eastern Slovakia.

Translated by Viera Tejbusová

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Spišské Podhradie-Dreveník, dôležitá paleolitická lokalita dolného Spiša

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Súhrn

Lokalita Spišské Podhradie-Dreveník je lokalizovaná na dolnom Spiši, v povodí rieky Hornád. Ide o travertínový komplex, na ktorom je evidované polykultúrne osídlenie z rozličných fáz obdobia praveku až po včasný stredovek. Z viacerých prieskumov na západnom svahu vrchu pochádza kolekcia 33 kusov štiepaných kamenných artefaktov. Z chronologického hľadiska je zastúpená staršia fáza mladého paleolitu (szeletien a aurignacien), ako aj neskorý paleolit a pravdepodobne mezolit. Do szeletienu možno zaradiť listovitý hrot (fragment špičky hrotu), čepeľ so šikmou koncovou retušou (*póttylczak*) s bifaciálnou retušou (obr. 3: 1, 6; 4: 1, 6) a jeden kombinovaný nástroj – škrabadlo/rydlo (obr. 3: 2; 4: 5). Ploché rydlo/dláto zhotovené z bazálnej časti čepele z dvojpodstavového jadra (obr. 3: 5; 4: 4), ktoré sa bežne vyskytuje v szeletien-ských a tiež v aurignacienských kolekciami. Na základe stavu zachovania (výrazná biela patina a náznak plošnej retuše) tu pravdepodobne môžeme začleniť tiež nasledujúce dva fragmenty (čepeľ a úštep), zaradené vyššie do praveku (paleolit?; obr. 7: 1, 2). Do neskorého paleolitu alebo aj mezolitu možno s najväčšou pravdepodobnosťou zaradiť sedem artefaktov. Spomedzi analyzovaných artefaktov je len jeden nástroj – fragmentárne retušovaná čepeľ so zlomenou bazálnou časťou (obr. 5: 1; 6: 1). Zvyšných šesť výrobkov predstavujú torzá rôznych častí čepeľí. Datovanie do vymedzeného chronologického rámca je problematické. Zdá sa však, že podľa technológie štiepania ich možno začleniť do neskorého paleolitu, resp. i mezolitu. Ostatné opísané artefakty možno zaradiť len všeobecne do praveku. Keďže miesto objavu kamenných artefaktov je momentálne akera-mické, možno usudzovať na ich paleolitický, resp. mezolitický vek. V tejto súvislosti uvedieme, že na Dreveníku je evidované bohaté polykultúrne osídlenie z praveku (neolit, eneolit, doba bronzová). Žiaľ, pokračujúca exploatácia travertínu zničila lokalitu úplne, a preto je na nej realizácia revízneho archeologického výskumu už nemožná.

Obr. 1. Situovanie lokality.

Obr. 2. Severný pohľad na zničenú časť paleolitickej lokality.

Obr. 3. Štiepaná kamenná industria zo staršej fázy mladého paleolitu. 1, 2, 6, 7 – rádiolarit; 3–5 – patinovaný silicit.

Obr. 4. Fotografická dokumentácia štiepanej kamennej industrie zo staršej fázy mladého paleolitu. 1, 5–7 – rádiolarit; 2–4 – patinovaný silicit.

Obr. 5. Štiepaná kamenná industria z neskorého paleolitu alebo mezolitu. 1, 2, 5–7 – rádiolarit; 3, 4 – čokoládový pazúrik.

Obr. 6. Fotografická dokumentácia štiepanej kamennej industrie z neskorého paleolitu alebo mezolitu. 1, 2, 5–7 – rádiolarit; 3, 4 – čokoládový pazúrik.

Obr. 7. Fotografická dokumentácia nevýraznej štiepanej kamennej industrie z praveku (paleolitu?). 1 – patinovaný silicit; 2–5, 7–19 – radiolarit; 6 – spálený silicit.

Obr. 8. Mapa paleolitických a mezolitických lokalít Spiša. 1 – Spišské Podhradie-Dreveník; 2 – Spišská Belá; 3 – Štrba; 4 – Haligovce; 5 – Poprad-Matejovce; 6 – Smižany; 7 – Beharovce; 8 – Spišské Vlaky; 9 – Domaňovce; 10 – Smižany/Spišská Nová Ves.

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