LITHIC INDUSTRIES IN HUNGARY DURING THE EXISTENCE OF VINČA CULTURE

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It is a special honour to take part in a conference devoted to one of the key sites of Neolithic research in the Carpathian Basin and Central Europe in general. Traditional, typologically oriented archaeology founding the basis of any further investigations has been based on, in our scope of interest, the layer sequence of the Vinca tell (VASIĆ 1936, MILOJČIĆ 1949). Recently several modern investigations have been devoted to this important site, in respect of the re-evaluation of old evidence as well as new excavations (CHAPMAN 1981). In course of this work, the lithic industry of the site has also been elaborated (RADOVANOVIĆ et al. 1984).

In Hungary, students of prehistoric archaeology have always paid distinguished interest to the study of the Vinca sequence. Modern chronological schemes as well are still based on, and synchronised with the Vinča sequence (KALICZ—RACZKY 1987). In the followings, I would like to give a short summary on lithic studies, from the periods of existence of the Vinča site, with special regard to the Southern parts of Hungary having direct contact with different phases of the Vinča complex.

THE EARLY NEOLITHIC

Very few lithic industries are known from this period. Available Körös material has been summarised, up till 1985, by BÁCSKAY (1976) and BÁCSKAY—SIMÁN (1987), respectively. The most numerous assemblage from NE Hungary, Méhtelek, has been elaborated by J. CHAPMAN (1987). In respect of raw material provenance, even less is known so far. Southern contacts were postulated for the depot find of Endrőd (KACZANOWSKA et al 1981), and in all probability, Tokaj obsidian is present on most sites. Data on LBC lithics was, summarised lately (BÍRÓ 1987), however, important new assemblages have been recovered from new excavations and elaboration of old material. From the aspect of provenance, the Transdanubian Earliest LBC materials (Szentlőrinc, Buda-

pest—Aranyhégy) speak for a varied mixed raf material basis while later LBC assemblages rely more on local high quality resources.

The Alföld parts have an almost homogeneous pattern of obsidian — limnic quartzite industriers. A seemingly stabile contact is formed between the lowland farmers and the inhabitants of the mountain-dwellers living up-streams; the Tiszadob and the Bükk cultures, respectively.

The "Transdanubian autarchy" as well as the "Bükk trade monopoly over the Alföld market" is equally ceasing by the end of the Middle Neolithic / beginnings of the Late Neolithic. In the past few years I had the chance to study this process as well as the Late Neolithic development in the very details. Analysis of large assemblages like Aszód, Öcsöd and Herpály is in progress and comparable major test-pits deepened on some Late Neolithic key sections were compared. Due to the fine stratigraphical record, these sites are especially suitable for tracing important changes of the period.

According to these sites, the following processes can be postulated: the originally locally based raw material supply, following the watercourses downstream and upwards the Tisza and its tributaries gradually gives place to raw materials of more distant origin coming from people belonging to different cultural tradition. The first in the process is the radiolarite of the Transdanubian Mid-Mountains appearing as early as the Late LBC on the Alföld, pretty frequent in Szakálhát assemblages. Different colour variants of this material are unevenly distributed which means, in the first place, an arbitrary (aesthethical) choice but also has some chronological implications. The mustard-yellow variant (Urkút—Eplény type) is seemingly restricted to Late Szakálhát and Early Tisza assemblages; Transdanubian evidence indicating that this variety was preferentially worked and traded by the people of the Sopot—Bicske culture and the early phase of the Lengyel culture (Baláca, Csabdi, Aszód, Sé: PALÁGYI et al. 1989, BÍRÓ—REGENYE in press). At the same time and later prevailingly, the Szentgál red variant of the Transdanubian radiolarites is spread over large parts of the lowland areas.

The other important Transdanubian material infiltrating the lowlans is Mecsek radiolarite, obviously associated with Early Lengyel culture as indicated by the analysis of large assemblages in South-Central Hungary (BÁCSKAY—BÍRÓ 1984, BÁCSKAY 1989, BÍRÓ 1989). On the Alföld parts this material is seemingly associated with the Gorzsa group; related assemblages as far as Hodoni still contain the same material. It must be noted however that the southern limits of the spreading of Mecsek radiolarite is an open question as yet, because it might interfere with raw materials of the Southern Carpathes as indicated by the site Gomolava near Hrtkovci (PAWLIKOWSKI in KACZANOWSKA—KOZLOWSKI 1986, 1987).

The contacts of the Gorzsa group include other important new directions as well. Following the Early Neolithic Körös culture, raw materials of southern origin have disappeared totally from the Hungarian territory of the Alföld. By the Late Neolithic, some sporadic occurrences can be observed first in the Szakálhát lithic assemblages of Battonya and single import pieces protrude the central parts of the Tisza valley (Szeg-

Hódmezővásárhely – Gorzsa

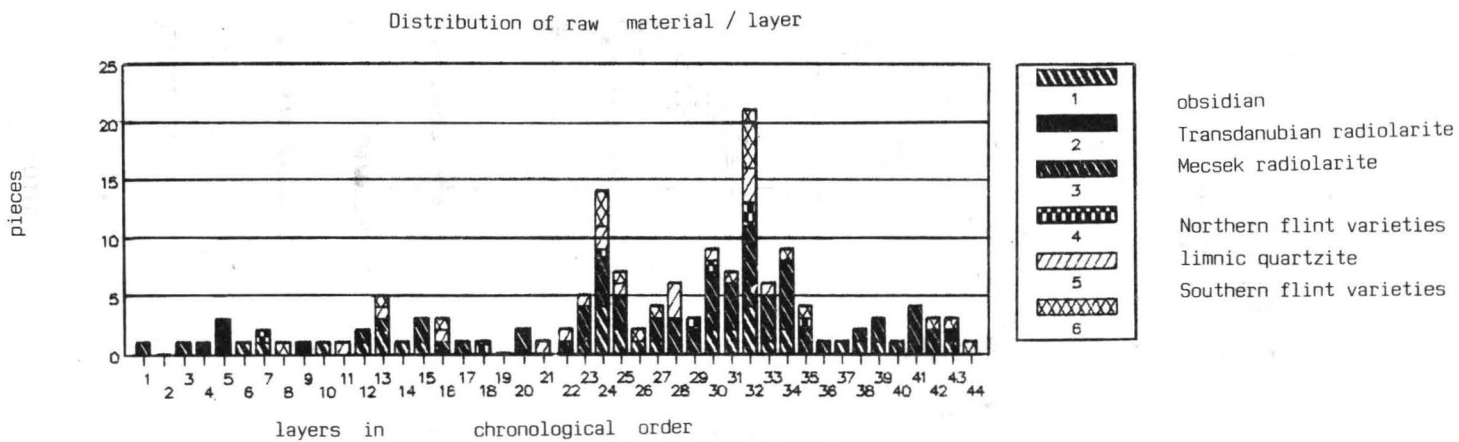

FIG. 1

Szegvár – Tűzköves

Distribution of raw material / layer

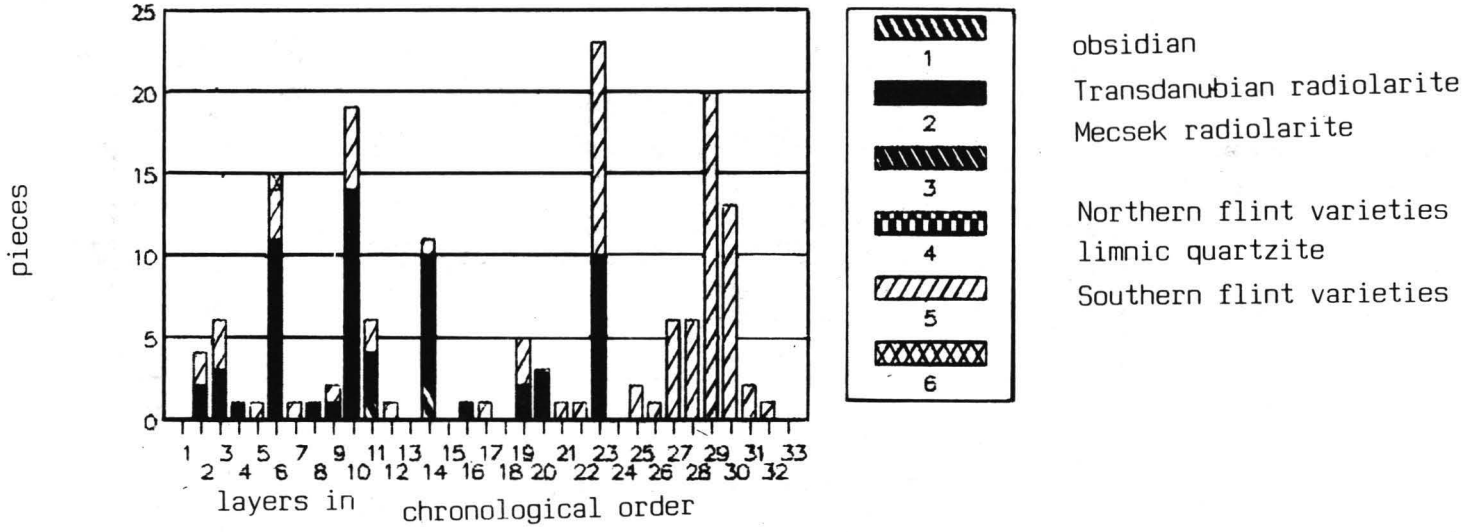

FIG. 2

Tápé – Lebő

Distribution of raw material / layer

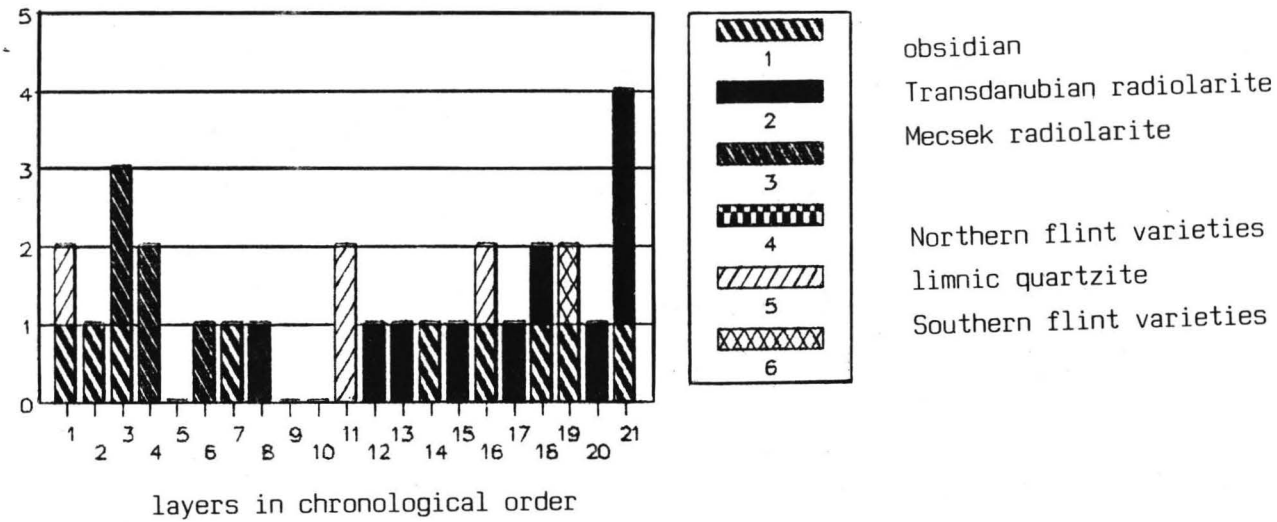

FIG. 3

vár). Considerable amount of raw materials of southern origin appear, however, only at Gorzsa. It is important to note that both the Mecsek radiolarite and varieties of Bánát flint appear throughout the whole sequence, proving lasting and continuous contact with the source areas (Fig. 1.). More dinamic picture on the changes of raw material composition are reflected by the sites Szegvár—Tüzköves and Tápé—Lebő (Fig. 2—3., HORVÁTH—BÍRÓ in prep.).

Parallel to these processes, important changes are taking place on the Northern parts of the Alföld as well. After the end of the Bükk culture, the obsidian sources seemingly cut off from the lowland people. This means more than obsidian; the Northern Alföld raw material supply is directed towards the Mátra environs rather than Tokaj containing obsidian and other qualities of limnic quartzite. Obsidian distribution data indicate that the source areas got under the control of the Lengyel culture who were neither keen, nor expertized on working Tokaj limnic quartzite preferring more homogeneous materials (radiolarite and Polish flint varieties).

The phenomenon we can observe is a definite shift of obsidian and limnic quartzite industries; in the first place, towards the West along the broad margins of the Lengyel culture habitation area, in the other case, the Western-Central parts of the Alföld. The North-Eastern parts of the Alföld region, primarily supplied by limnic quartzite and obsidian in the Middle Neolithic receive the bulk of the raw material from outside the Carpathes during the Late Neolithic (and, the Early Copper Age as well). The tell settlement of Berettyóújfalu—Herpály is basically supplied, all along the multi-layered sequence, by excellent quality flint of the Prut—Dniestr region. Processing the raw material took place locally and involved great quantities. Typological arguments (resemblance to Precucuteni-Cucuteni forms which are alien from Alföld LBC traditions) also indicate that the changes in the raw material structure had a more profound, historical meaning.

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