GORHAYK, A NEW PALEOLITHIC SITE IN SYUNIK MARZ (PROVINCE) IN SOUTHERN ARMENIA: USING REGOLITH EVOLUTION TO DETERMINE SITE FORMATION PROCESS

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The Syunik Province
Gorhayk survey

C. Bell
Gorhayk survey

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View of Gorhayk before 2012 excavation
The 2012 excavation overview
Large biface *in situ* 2012
Handaxe Gorhayk 2012
Map of Gorhayk excavations
The spatial temporal distribution of lithics
Carinated core
Notch/Denticulate on flake
Point
Blade (Backed)
Side scraper
Bladelet core on biface
Geological and archaeological horizons
# Stratigraphical profile of Gorhayk 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archaeological strata</th>
<th>Depth</th>
<th>Archaeological strata</th>
<th>Soil Horizons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>10 cm</td>
<td>Top soil</td>
<td>Horizon A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>15 cm</td>
<td>Brown loam/paleosol which included EUP lithics</td>
<td>Horizon B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>35 cm</td>
<td>White hard weathered basalt eroded into gray clay with a strike of up to 45 degrees north.</td>
<td>Horizon C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>45 cm</td>
<td>Weathered basalt mixed with brown loam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>5 cm</td>
<td>Grey basalt fragments, Dip 45 degrees North</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>20 cm</td>
<td>Brown and Yellow sandy loam with basalt grains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>10 cm (visible)</td>
<td>Basalt Base Rock</td>
<td>Bedrock</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOW TO EXPLAIN GORHAYK?

• Evidence suggest that despite the strange assemblage it is an UP *in situ* assemblage

• The question then becomes how to explain the inclusion of large bifaces in an upper Paleolithic assemblage.
  – Different site function
  – Reuse of LP tools by UP population
  – Deposited by previous occupant of the region (low density)
Conclusions

• Gorhayk presents a new occupation of modern humans in Southern Armenia
• This adds to the corpus of lithic assemblages from the Middle – Upper Paleolithic transition in the Caucasus.