

A prehistoric site discovered in Sumatra in 1975

Location of the Gunung Meraksa deposit, South Sumatra, Indonesia

Prehistoric artifacts have been unearthed near the now-abandoned Gunung Meraksa (Me-14) oil well. These flint artifacts were found on/in a layer of soil covering laterite bedrock, at the edge of a natural promontory. Exploration of the site was limited due to time constraints. Accessing the site remains a major challenge, as the road leading to it was most likely abandoned after its reconstruction in 1975. The road winds through dense jungle crisscrossed by numerous deep ravines. Before attempting such a journey, it would undoubtedly be advisable to seek the approval and guidance of Pertamina, the national oil company. And it's important to remember that this region is the natural habitat of Sumatran tigers, elephants, bears, and numerous snakes and scorpions.

The found objects

The recovered artifacts (Fig. 2) consist mainly of flint tools with worked faces showing traces of impact and numerous flakes of the same material. The high concentration of these flakes suggests that this was a workshop rather than a residential site. The abundance of silicified wood in the nearby rivers logically dictated the location of this workshop.

Analysis of the siliceous material reveals the presence of plant debris (Fig. 3). Finally, the serrated edges of some objects indicate a percussion manufacturing technique (Fig. 4).

A rigorous analysis of the site and the manufacturing technique is, however, absolutely necessary to place it within the inventory of known deposits in South Sumatra as described by Forestier et al. in "Les productions lithiques de l'Archipel Indonésien", *Journal of Lithic Studies* (2017) vol. 4, nr. 2.

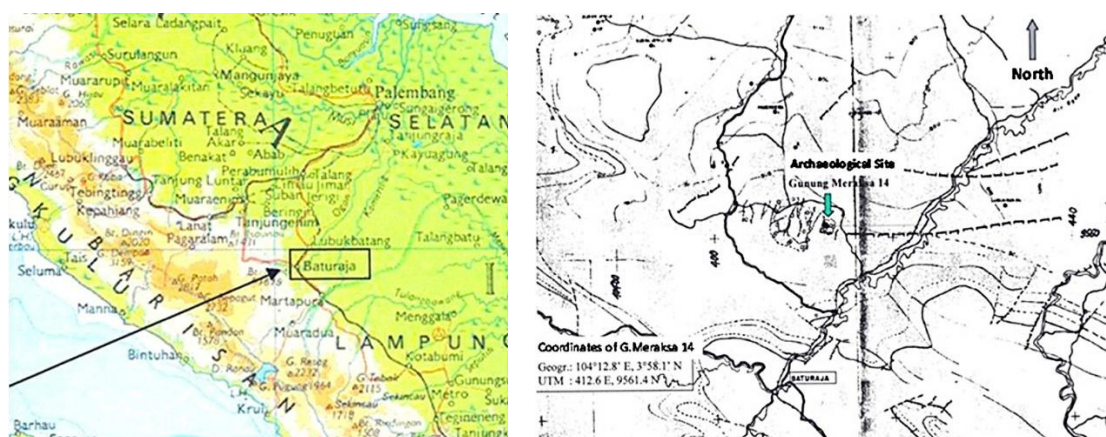


Fig.1 Situation map and access to the Gunung Meraksa prehistoric site.



Fig. 2 Examples of artifacts and shards collected at the Gunung Meraksa site.

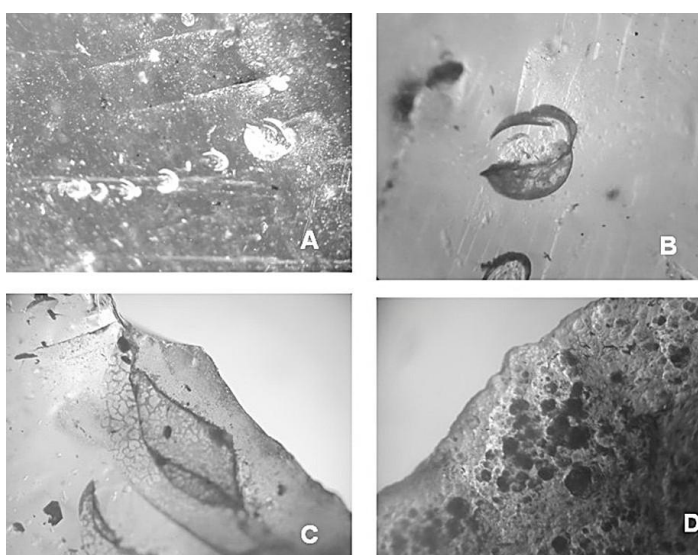


Fig. 3 Debris Plant matter (pollen, cuticles , etc.) trapped within the flint mass (A, B , C). Rough surface of the flint (D).

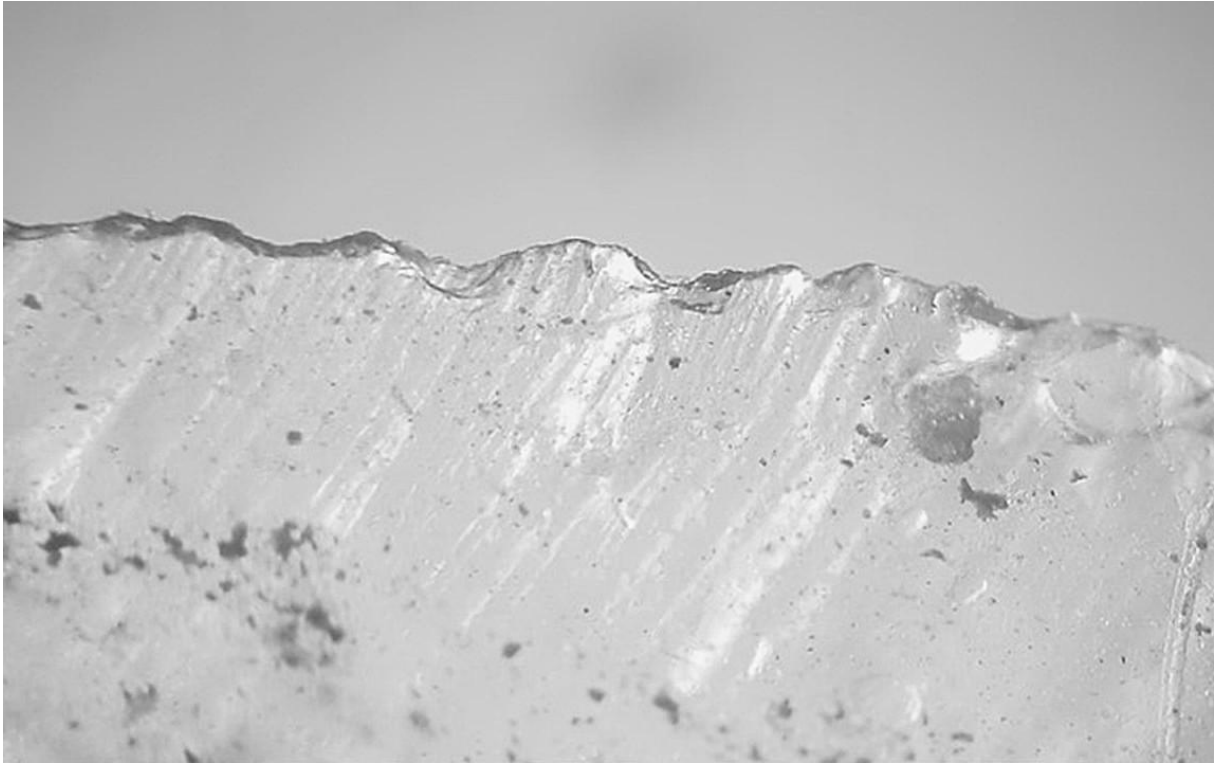


Fig.4 Edge detail of one artefact, suggesting the use of percussion technique.