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The Upper Paleolithic in the Bistrița Valley (Northeastern Romania): a preliminary review

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Keywords: Eastern Romania, Aurignacian, Gravettian, geochronology, cultural framework

Abstract: The paper deals with the Upper Palaeolithic in the Bistrița Valley (northeastern Romania). In spite of the richness of the Palaeolithic sites from this Carpathian area, the Palaeolithic record has remained largely ignored by Western studies. Apart from the most obvious reason, the language barrier, another particularly important motive for this cautious attitude seems to have been the chrono-cultural framework proposed by Romanian archaeologists, which hardly fitted the accepted European evolutionary model for the Aurignacian and Gravettian technocomplexes. According to the first excavators, the Upper Palaeolithic industries in the Bistrița Valley display some original features, such as atypical techno-typological structure and the late chronology for the so-called Aurignacian assemblages, and the apparent geological contemporaneity between the two technocomplexes.

The dense network of Palaeolithic sites in the Bistrița Valley became known due to a vast rescue project initiated in the 1950s. The huge dam from Izvorul Muntelui was about to

submerge more than 60 km and about 30 villages in the area. 16 Upper Palaeolithic sites were identified

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ⁱ *România Documente străine despre români* (Foreign Documents Concerning the Romanians), ed. II, Bucureşti, 1992, p. 54-55

ⁱⁱ Hurmuzaki, vol. XV/I, Buc., 1911, p.45.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hurmuzaki, vol. XV/I, Buc., 1911, p.45.

^{iv} *Călători străini despre ţările române* (Foreign Travellers on the Romanian Countries), vol. îngrijit de M.Holban, Bucureşti, 1968, p.126.

^v Hurmuzaki, vol. XV/I, Buc., 1911, p.47.