

THE POIANA CIREȘULUI UPPER PALEOLITHIC SITE – THE LAST STAGE OF RESEARCH (1998-2005)

Marin Cârciumaru, Mircea Anghelinu, Géraldine Lucas, Loredana Niță, Leif Steguweit, Monica Mărgărit, Laure Fontana, Alexis Brugère, Valentin Dumitrașcu, Ulrich Hambach, Marian Cosac, Ovidiu Cârștina, Florin Dumitru

The Poiana Cireșului Upper Paleolithic site is located on the erosion level cut into the flysch strata, roughly equivalent in altitude to the middle (45 m) Bistrița's terrace, on the right shore of the river, 4 km N-W from the city of Piatra-Neamț (North-Eastern Romania). The systematic excavations are currently carried out by an international Romanian, German and French team. The paper focuses on the recent results obtained during the last stage of research (1998-2005) campaigns. The site displays one Neolithic layer and four documented paleolithic stages of occupation, already systematically uncovered during the last seven years. At least two more archaeological horizons lay below the last excavated one, as shown by the recent drills. The thin Neolithic layer stands in some poorly preserved pottery remains and a few scattered lithic tools, and it apparently belongs to Criș archaeological culture. The Paleolithic human presence is much more consistent. Except the very thin Tardiglacial Epigravettian layer, partially disturbed by the late Neolithic activity, three other horizons were identified: a rich Epigravettian layer, resulted from at least three occupational episodes (Epigravettian II) and two Gravettian layers (Gravettian I and II). The paper stresses the richness of the archaeological record in the Epigravettian and Gravettian II layer. In this respect, the technological analysis of the stone and bone/antler/ivory industry is presented, together with a brief description of the stratigraphical evidences. The excellent state of preservation of the organic material, together with the richly documented human activity and the long geological sequence point to the central importance Poiana Cireșului holds, both for the understanding of the long-term Paleolithic cultural dynamics in this area and for the short-term behavioral variability.