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POTOCKA ZIJALKA – PALAEONTOLOGICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS OF THE EXCAVATION CAMPAIGNS 1997 – 2000: A MONOGRAPH

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Potocka zijalka lies on the southern slope of the Olceva in the Karwanken mountain chain in northern Slovenia at 1700 m a.s.l.. It is the cave with the most findings of the Alpine Palaeolithic. This was the result of an excavation campaign organized by S. Brodar in the years 1928 – 1935. The archaeological results (more than 300 stone-artefacts and approximately 130 bone points) were published in a monograph together with the stratigraphy of the cave and the history of investigation (BRODAR, S. & M., 1983). The palaeontological findings, above all the cave bear remains, were destroyed in the Second World War. To explore new cave bear material and to resolve the chronological position of this bear, a second excavation campaign was initialised in collaboration with the Universities of Ljubljana and Vienna and the Austrian Academy of Science. The analysis of the recovered material brought forth new results about the Pleistocene fauna of the cave, which will be presented in a monograph in autumn 2004.

The following topics are included: History of investigation, geology, sedimentology, pollen analysis, large mammal remains, small vertebrate remains of the “Kleinsäugerschicht”, taphonomical, metrical, palaeobiological, pathological examination of the cave bear remains as well as their systematic position. A scapula from the cave bear holds evidence for cave bear hunting. An unhealed hole in the scapula is about the right size to be inflicted by a bone point.

During the last excavations, new archaeological findings were recovered and for the first time ancient DNA analysis of bone points had been undertaken. The most astonishing result was the use of cave bear material among others as raw material for the bone points. Stratigraphy and chronology of the site had been reconstructed.

Reference

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