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Reconstructing the formation of the Upper Palaeolithic find horizons at Krems-Wachtberg

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Well-known for the discovery of infant burials in 2005 and 2006, the multi-disciplinary investigations at the Gravettian site of Krems-Wachtberg in east Austria provided a wealth of data in the course of ten years of field research. Of major importance is the exposure of a well-preserved occupation layer which connects the burials to other activities conserved in the form of evident structures such as pits and hearths. Equally important for an assessment of the site is the presence of a find layer with re-located archaeological material immediately on top of the primary deposits. Whereas the occupation layer is mainly a direct result of human activities, the layer with re-deposited finds provides detailed insights into sedimentation processes. Slope dynamics and loess sedimentation, together with a number of other periglacial processes, are responsible for the conservation in some cases, as well as for the dislocation of objects and destruction of primary archaeological findings in others. Based on detailed documentation and analyses, the disintegration and dislocation of primary contexts can be modelled and connected to the determining periglacial processes. A reconstruction of the site's formation seems possible not only for the recently excavated findspot but also – on a greater scale – for the entire Wachtberg hill which includes the Upper Palaeolithic Krems-Wachtberg and Krems-Hundssteig sites.