

# Ice ageEUROPE

NETWORK OF HERITAGE SITES

*Magazine*

ISSUE 5 MAY 2021

## Covid-19

Reflecting on  
and dealing with the pandemic  
– pages 8–13

## On the shoulders of giants

A short history of Basque archaeology  
– page 24

## (How) Do we see ourselves in the process of evolution?

Observations from a visitor study  
– page 28

## Neanderthal research

Insights from Portugal to Croatia – pages 14–21





## INTRODUCTION

**Welcome** to the fifth edition of our annual Ice Age Europe magazine! It highlights the many activities taking place at the different Ice Age sites across Europe – from research and conservation to education and communication. A special focus this year is devoted to Neanderthal research, which continues to produce new and exciting discoveries – from Portugal, where our new member Côa Park Foundation is at home, all the way across the continent to Croatia (see pages 14–21).

It is a cherished tradition to welcome guest authors in every issue. This year, Sanjin Mihelic, Zagreb Archaeological Museum and Ivor Janković, Institute for Anthropological Research, Croatia, introduce us to iNEAL, a new international network of Neanderthal scholars, in which several of our members are partners (see pages 6–7).

Like all museums and sites in the world, we have been concerned with the pandemic since last year. The team of Ekainberri reflects on pandemics in Prehistoric times and today and we see Fumane Cave as well as MUSE, Science Museum of Trento, as examples of how the educational offers for visitors could be adapted to the new situation (see pages 8–13). Our bi-annual network meetings had of course to be moved to the virtual sphere, but are now taking place more frequently.

At the same time we developed new digital projects, e.g., a short film series “Secrets and Highlights of Ice Age Europe” (see our website and YouTube channel) and our [#IceAgeChallenge](#), which runs all year round on Facebook and Instagram. Special virtual live tours and a virtual exhibition are currently being planned.

We are pleased to be once more an official partner of the European Archaeology Days from June 18 to 20, 2021, and will host our own [#IceAgeEuropeDay](#) on September 19, 2021.

If you would like to get in touch with any question or enquiry, please contact Katrin Hieke at our network office via [office@ice-age-europe.eu](mailto:office@ice-age-europe.eu) or via our social media channels.

This and all previous issues of our magazine are available online only and for free on our website

[www.ice-age-europe.eu/learn-and-discover/magazine.html](http://www.ice-age-europe.eu/learn-and-discover/magazine.html).

We hope you enjoy reading!

Dr. Bärbel Auffermann

Chair of the Ice Age Europe Network

Director of the Neanderthal Museum, Germany

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# Ice age EUROPE

## NETWORK OF HERITAGE SITES

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Panel No.1 of Canada do Inferno rock art site. Photo: António Jerónimo

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10



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19



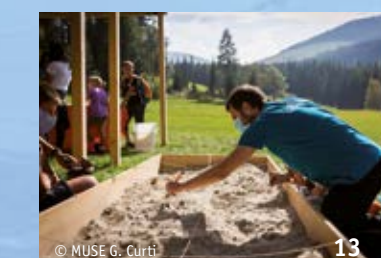
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22



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26



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13



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28



GUEST CONTRIBUTION

**Integrating Neanderthal Legacy: From Past to Present. A new international network of Neanderthal scholars launched as a COST Action at the end of 2020** ..... 6  
Sanjin Mihelic / Zagreb Archaeological Museum, Croatia, Ivor Janković /  
Institute for Anthropological Research, Zagreb, Croatia

MUSEUMS & SITES AND THE PANDEMIC

**COVID-19 in prehistory and nowadays. Evolution or involution** ..... 8  
Ekainberri Team / Ekainberri – The Replica of the Ekain Cave, Spain

**Living cultural activities in the new global reality: the accepted challenge of Fumane Cave** ..... 10  
Nicolò Scialpi / Fumane Cave, Italy

**An attempt to boost the multidisciplinary of our educational activities: looking for prehistoric clues in the Botanical Gardens** ..... 12  
Elisabetta Flor, Lisa Angelini / MUSE – Science Museum of Trento, Italy

RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION

**Côa Valley: Neanderthals lived here before us** ..... 14  
Thierry Aubry, Luís Luís, André Tomás Santos /  
Côa Museum and Archaeological Park of the Côa Valley, Portugal

**The Surroundings of Altamira archaeological site or How we know that the Neanderthals also lived around the Cave of Altamira** ..... 16  
Lucía M. Díaz-González, Déborah Ordás Pastrana /  
National Museum and Research Centre of Altamira, Spain

**Back to the Neanderthals** ..... 18  
Benjamin Schürch / Archaeopark Vogelherd, Germany

**A depiction of symbolic behaviour of Neanderthals in the Krapina Neanderthal Museum** ..... 20  
Lorka Lončar Uvodić / Krapina Neanderthal Museum, Croatia

MUSEUMS, EXHIBITIONS & EDUCATION

**Inauguration of “Le Phare d’Andenne”** ..... 22  
Arthur Heimann / Scladina Cave Archaeological Centre, Belgium

**On the shoulders of giants: The history of Basque archaeology** ..... 24  
Iñaki García Camino / Bizkaia Museum of Archaeology, Spain

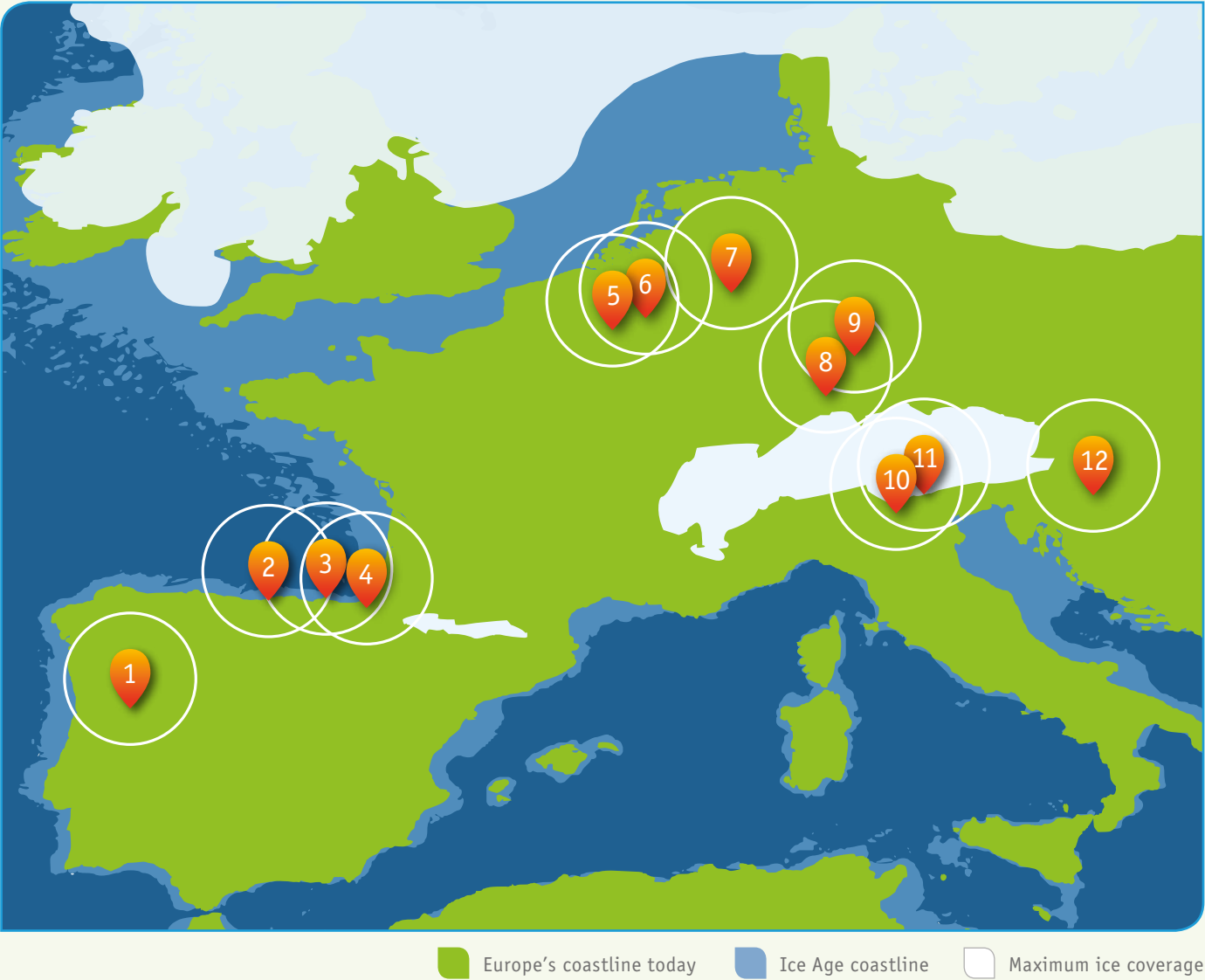
**Care in the Ice Age** ..... 26  
Hannes Wiedmann / Museum of Prehistory, Germany

**(How) Do we see ourselves in the process of evolution?** ..... 28  
Rick Springer / Neanderthal Museum, Germany

**The Laboratory of Experimental Archaeology at the Préhistomuseum – A real service for researchers at a mediating museum** ..... 30  
Cécile Jungels / Préhistomuseum, Belgium

# Ice age europe

## NETWORK OF HERITAGE SITES



### LOCATIONS

- PORTUGAL**

1 CÔA MUSEUM AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK OF THE CÔA VALLEY - Vila Nova Foz Côa
- SPAIN**

2 NATIONAL MUSEUM AND RESEARCH CENTER OF ALTAMIRA - Santillana del Mar

3 CAVES OF SANTIMAMIÑE AND BIZKAIA MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY - Bilbao

4 EKAINBERRI - THE REPLICA OF THE EKAIN CAVE - Zestoa
- BELGIUM**

5 SCLADINA CAVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CENTRE - Sclayn/Andenne

6 PRÉHISTOMUSEUM - Flémalle
- GERMANY**

7 NEANDERTHAL MUSEUM - Mettmann

8 MUSEUM OF PREHISTORY - Blaubeuren

9 ARCHÄOPARK VOGELHERD - Niederstotzingen-Stetten
- ITALY**

10 FUMANE CAVE - Fumane

11 MUSE - SCIENCE MUSEUM OF TRENTO - Trento
- CROATIA**

12 KRAPINA NEANDERTHAL MUSEUM - Krapina



Fig. 2: Cardina-Salto do Boi site, © Côa Parque

# CÔA VALLEY: NEANDERTHALS LIVED HERE BEFORE US

Côa Museum and Archaeological Park of the Côa Valley, Portugal /  
Authors: Thierry Aubry, Luís Luís and André Tomás Santos

The unexpected discovery of Ice Age carvings preserved in open-air outcrops of the Côa Riverbanks, in 1991, during the construction of a hydroelectric dam in this remote area of north-eastern Portugal has led to a hard debate in Portuguese society. The magnitude of the number and distribution of its engraved panels became impossible to ignore and open-air rock art could no longer be seen as a rare exception to the cave art rule. The discovery of settlements where its artists lived and, in 1999, of the first open-air engraved panel covered by dated deposits and Palaeolithic remains, have proved that these images were from the Ice Age and contemporary to cave art (Fig. 1).

The number and density of Upper Palaeolithic panels discovered in the valley, which today exceed half a thousand, have also forced the scientific community to question itself. Would the Palaeolithic artists have really privileged the caves for their art or is the cave art dominance merely due to the fact that it is more suitable to preservation, compared to open-air? Could the Côa Valley, along with a few other sites in Iberia and one in the eastern Pyrenees, be only a small preserved portion of a common form of Palaeolithic graphic communication? New discoveries of Palaeolithic open-air rock art in Germany and in the Nile Valley plead in favour of this hypothesis.

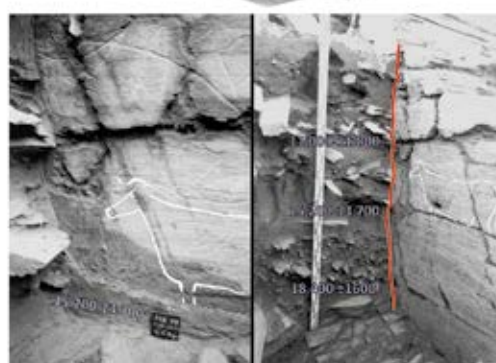
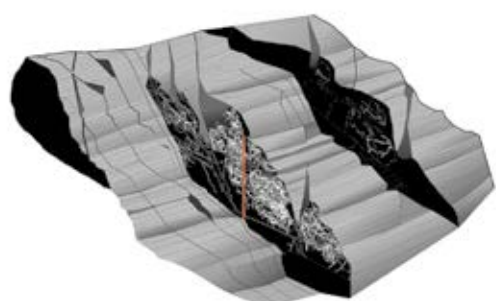


Fig. 1: Superimposition of carved figures covered by dated deposits that contained Upper Palaeolithic archaeological remains, © Côa Parque



Fig. 3: Stratigraphic sequence preserving Middle and Upper Palaeolithic, © Côa Parque

The Côa discovery and archaeological evidences have confirmed the rock art stylistic attribution, opening new avenues to understand the meaning of these images and Ice Age societies.

An archaeological park was created in 1996, offering guided tours to three of the rock art sites. The exceptional heritage value of Palaeolithic art of the Côa Valley has been confirmed by its inscription in UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1998. In 2010, a Museum was inaugurated, designed by the architects Tiago Rebelo and Camilo Pimentel. It is a building located at the top of the hill over the confluence of the Côa with the Douro, from which one can observe a view of the Douro Valley that is quite representative of another world heritage that is also found here: the Alto Douro Wine Region.

The preservation of the Côa Valley rock art heritage and public divulgation have demonstrated that despite more than one century of archaeological works and cultural projects development in Europe, data are still missing to understand Ice Age societies and reconstruct the history of Modern Human settlement in most of Europe.

Furthermore, the timing and reasons of the Neanderthal demise and a possible overlap with Anatomically Modern Humans in some regions of Eurasia continues to be one of the most debated issue of human evolution. The Iberian Peninsula has been considered as a possible refuge zone for the last Neanderthals. Cardina-Salto do Boi was the first open-air settlement discovered in 1995 during the survey carried out in the Côa Valley to define the context of recently discovered Palaeolithic rock art (Fig. 2). Halfway between the central Portuguese and Asturias site clusters of Middle and Upper Palaeolithic, it has the potential to provide an important new contribution to this ongoing debate. The study of the 5-metre-thick sequence of deposits containing artefacts from the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic revealed by the excavations realized between 2014 and 2019 (Fig. 3), and the ages obtained by OSL in 2020, support the persistence of Neanderthals in this region of inland Iberia until 39,000 years Before Present. The data also confirm a late arrival



Fig. 4: Rock crystal tool recovered in a Neanderthal occupation dated from 50,000 years, © Côa Parque

## ABOUT CÔA MUSEUM AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK OF THE CÔA VALLEY

As an immense open-air gallery, the Côa Valley features more than a thousand outcrops with rock art, identified in over 80 different sites, predominantly from the Upper Palaeolithic, some 25,000 years ago. In 1998, UNESCO included the Pre-historic Rock Art of the Côa Valley in the World Heritage List. The Côa Museum serves as a gateway to the "real" museum: the open-air rock art sites. At the present time, four sites are open for regular public visitation.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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More information at [www.arte-coa.pt](http://www.arte-coa.pt)

of Modern Humans and Aurignacian culture, only after 34,000 years BP, in this region, as proposed for southern Iberia.

These recent evidences reveal a completely unknown occupation by Neanderthals in this area, dating from at least 100,000 years ago, preceding the Modern Human rock art that was only identified at the end of the 20th century, providing new evidence about subsistence strategies (Fig. 4) and social networks of the two human populations.

The map of Palaeolithic sites of Europe and the interpretation of the settlement has shown many changes from the end of the 19th century. Investigation focusing on other regions than the classical karstic regions with caves and rock shelters is necessary to establish more consistent models for Neanderthal disappearance and Modern Human expansion in the Iberian Peninsula. ■

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“These recent evidences  
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