

Field School for Quaternary Palaeoanthropology and Prehistory of Murcia, S.E. Spain



Cueva Negra hand-axe

June 30th – July 21st 2011 at Cueva Negra del Estrecho del Río Quipar,
July 21st – August 11th 2011 at Sima de las Palomas del Cabezo Gordo

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Sima de las Palomas Neanderthal child skull

Excavation has been ongoing for 20 years at these two sites. Cueva Negra has 6 teeth and possible long-bone fragments of pre-Neanderthal hominid remains (*H. heidelbergensis*), a final Early (i.e. Lower) Pleistocene fauna and Acheulian and Levallois-Mousterian Palaeolithic artefacts in a sedimentary deposit from a time somewhere between 780,000 and 990,000 years ago according to both biostratigraphy and now palaeomagnetism (Scott & Gibert, 2009, *Nature* 461:82-85). Sima de las Palomas has >300 skeletal parts (teeth, bones) of 9 or 10 Neanderthal individuals, including 3 articulated skeletons one of which is 85% complete from between 60,000 and 40,000 years ago, an early Late (i.e. Upper) Pleistocene fauna and Mousterian Palaeolithic artefacts, dated by ¹⁴C, U-ser, OSL and ESR.

Helpers are invited for the 2011 summer field season. All applications are considered sympathetically. You need not have archaeological experience. To apply, just send an email with brief cv after going to our web-page, clicking there on FIELD SCHOOL and then on "BRIEFING YOU" (there's no application form to fill in as we keep paperwork to a minimum). We give you certificates of attendance at the field school and excavations, and sign any forms your university may give you.

While at Cueva Negra we stay at the residential Asacruz school (which has its own kitchen staff) at Caravaca de la Cruz. While at Sima de las Palomas we put bunks in the school in Dolores de Pacheco and take our meals in the restaurant of the village civic centre. At both places, you must bring sheets, pillow-slip, towel, soap and shower-gel. Summer is hot in Murcia: you'll get a chance to swim. Bring light work clothes and flat-soled light footwear for Cueva Negra but bring work boots for Sima de las Palomas. Bring sun-hats, sunglasses, sun-cream, swimmers. If you've a driver's licence, bring it and help us with driving our 4x4 vehicle.

Ryanair flies daily to Murcia-San Javier Airport from London (Luton and Stansted); and Easyjet from Gatwick (it also flies here from Bristol and Newcastle). Other budget airlines also fly here from the UK and other European countries. Provided we have their flight details in advance we ferry these helpers (free of charge) between Murcia-San Javier Airport and our field headquarters who arrive on Thursday June 30th, or who arrive or depart on Thursday July 21st, or leave on Thursday August 11th. Caravaca is 100 kilometres from the airport, but Dolores de Pacheco is only 6 kms from it. We run from Thursdays to Thursdays as we often have USA helpers flying into Madrid who need to get connecting weekday flights to Murcia. Travellers by train on June 30th or 21st can probably be also met by us. For Cueva Negra, train-travellers should arrive at Calasparra railway station (Madrid-Cartagena line) on June 30th and leave July 21st. For Sima de las Palomas, train travellers should arrive at Balsicas-Mar Menor railway station (Madrid-Cartagena or Barcelona-Cartagena lines) on July 21st and leave on August 11th. All other travellers must make their own arrangements to get to our headquarters at Caravaca de la Cruz or Dolores de Pacheco. We do not meet people at Alicante International Airport, from where travellers will have to take a "Costa Cálida" bus to Murcia, and then buses from Murcia bus station, either to Caravaca (for Cueva Negra), or to San Javier or Los Alcázares which are 5 kilometres from Dolores de Pacheco (for Sima de las Palomas).

Daily routine: we rise at 7 a.m. and after a light breakfast we excavate from 8 a.m. till 2 p.m. with a mid-morning sandwich. A cooked lunch at 3 p.m. is followed by a nap. We sort finds from 5 p.m. till 9 p.m. when we have a hot dinner. In each 3-week period, three long talks are given about our work and human evolution, and we also visit local places of interest. The programme is thus based on a 3-week cycle. You can stay for a shorter time but you'll miss part of the programme. The full cost to helpers is € 50 (euros) a day; it covers instruction, board, lodging, and local transportation. To guarantee a place you must send a non-returnable deposit, preferably by May 1st 2011, of €250 (euros) per each 7 days of intended stay. You pay the balance on arrival (so for 3 weeks you deposit €750 and pay €300 on arrival; for 10 days you deposit €500 but then owe nothing more). You must arrange your own health and personal accident insurance cover beforehand, holiday/travel insurance if desired, and sign an indemnity form on arrival. EU residents should bring the EU card from their country entitling them to public health care in other EU Member States.

Some work about our sites (* = pdf available on request; # = beware, dates here have been revised in later publications, especially for Cueva Negra which has got older and older)

- *2012 forthcoming: M.J.Walker, M.López-Martínez, J.S.Carrión-García, T.Rodríguez-Estrella, M.San-Nicolás-del-Toro, J-L. Schwenninger, A.López-Jiménez, J.Ortega-Rodríguez, M.Haber-Urriarte, J-L.Polo-Camacho, J.García-Torres, M.Campillo-Boj, A.Avilés-Fernández: "Cueva Negra del Estrecho del Río Quipar (Murcia, Spain): A late Early Pleistocene hominin site with an "Acheulo-Levallois-Mousteroid" Palaeolithic assemblage." *Quaternary International*.
- *2011 in press: M.J.Walker, M.V.López-Martínez, J.Ortega-Rodríguez, M.Haber-Urriarte, A.López-Jiménez, A.Avilés-Fernández, J.L.Polo-Camacho, M.Campillo-Boj, J.García-Torres, J.S.Carrión-García, M.San Nicolás-del Toro, T.Rodríguez-Estrella: "The excavation of buried articulated Neanderthal skeletons at Sima de las Palomas (Murcia, SE Spain)." *Quaternary International*.
- 2010 in press: M.J.Walker, J.Zapata, A.V.Lombardi, E.Trinkaus, "New evidence of dental pathology in 40,000 year old Neanderthals." *Journal of Dental Research*.
- *2010 (early digital version published on-line in Dec. 2010; print version will appear in 2011): M.J. Walker, J.Ortega Rodríguez, M.V.López Martínez, K.Parmová, E.Trinkaus: "Neanderthal postcranial remains from the Sima de las Palomas del Cabezo Gordo, Murcia, southeastern Spain." *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*.
- *2010 M.J.Walker, A.V.Lombardi, J.Zapata, E.Trinkaus: "Neanderthal mandibles from the Sima de las Palomas del Cabezo Gordo, Murcia, southeastern Spain." *American J. Physical Anthropology* 142: 261-272.
- *2010 (early digital version published on-line in Oct. 2010): M.J.Walker, M.López Martínez, M.Haber Uriarte, A.López Jiménez, J.Ortega Rodríguez, A.Avilés Fernández, M.Campillo Boj: "La Sima de las Palomas del Cabezo Gordo en Torre Pacheco y la Cueva Negra del Estrecho del Río Quipar en Caravaca de la Cruz: Dos ventanas sobre la vida y la muerte del Hombre Fósil en Murcia." *Acta Científica y Tecnológica*. The colour illustrations are fine, so please open it even though the text is in Spanish: <http://www.aecientificos.es/escaparate/verpagina.cgi?idpagina=20630480&refcompra=>
- *2009 M.J.Walker: "Long-term memory and Middle Pleistocene 'Mysterians'," pp. 75-84 in S.A.de Beaune, F.L.Coolidge, T.Wynn (eds), *Cognitive Archaeology and Human Evolution*. Cambridge University Press.
- *2008 M.J.Walker, J.Gibert, M.López, V.Lombardi, A.Pérez Pérez, J.Zapata, J.Ortega, T.Higham, A.Pike, J-L.Schwenninger, J.Zilhao, E.Trinkaus: "Late Neanderthals in Southeastern Iberia: Sima de las Palomas del Cabezo Gordo, Murcia, Spain." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA* 105:20631-20636
- *#2006 M.J.Walker, T.Rodríguez-Estrella, J.S.Carrión, M.A.Mancheño, J-L.Schwenninger, M.López, A.López, M.San Nicolás, M.D.Hills, T.Walking: "Cueva Negra del Estrecho del Río Quipar (Murcia, Southeast Spain): An Acheulian and Levallois-Mousteroid assemblage of Palaeolithic artifacts excavated in a Middle Pleistocene faunal context with hominin skeletal remains." *Eurasian Prehistory* 4: 3-43.
- #2004 M.J.Walker, J.Gibert, A.Eastham, T.Rodríguez-Estrella, J.S.Carrión, E.I.Yli, A.J.Legaz, A.López, M.López, G.Romero: "Neanderthals and their landscapes: Middle palaeolithic land use in the Segura drainage basin and adjacent areas of SE Spain". Pp. 461-511 in N.J.Conard (ed), *Settlement Dynamics of the Middle Palaeolithic and Middle Stone Age 2*. Tübingen:Kerns, "Tübingen Studies in Prehistory 2".
- #2004 M.J.Walker, J.Gibert, T.Rodríguez, M.López, A.Legaz, A.López: "Two Neanderthal Man sites in Murcia (SE Spain): Sima de las Palomas del Cabezo Gordo and Cueva Negra del Estrecho del Quipar". Pp. 167-189 in M.Toussaint, C.Draily, J-M.Cords (eds), *Premiers hommes et paléolithique inférieur. Human origins and the Lower Palaeolithic. Sessions générales et posters. General Sessions and Posters. Actes du XIVe Congrès UISPP (Union International des Sciences Préhistoriques et Protohistoriques) Université de Liège, Belgique, 2-8 septembre 2001. Acts of the XIVth UISPP Congress, University of Liège, Belgium, 2-8 September 2001*. Oxford, Archaeopress, "BAR International series 1272".
- *#2003 J.S.Carrión, E.I.Yli, M.J.Walker, A.J.Legaz, C.Chain, A.López: "Glacial refugia of temperate, Mediterranean and Ibero-North African flora in south-eastern Spain: new evidence from cave pollen at two Neanderthal man sites." *Global Ecology and Biogeography* 12: 119-129.
- #2001 M.J.Walker: "Excavations at Cueva Negra del Estrecho del Río Quipar and Sima de las Palomas del Cabezo Gordo: two sites in Murcia (south-east Spain) with Neanderthal skeletal remains, Mousterian palaeolithic assemblages and late Middle to early Upper Pleistocene fauna." Pp. 153-159 in S.Milliken, J.Cook (eds), *A Very Remote Period Indeed. Papers on the Palaeolithic Presented to Derek Roe*. Oxford: Oxbow.

