

ANNUAL REPORT: COVA GRAN SANTA LINYA (SPAIN) 2013 FIELD SCHOOL

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Students excavating Middle Paleolithic levels

GENERAL

The Cova Gran de Santa Linya field school, located in Catalunya, Spain, took place June 30th to August 3rd, 2013. A total of nine students and five staff members participated this season. Six of the students were from the Institute of Field Research (IFR) and the other three were from various Spanish universities.

RESEARCH

Fieldwork was conducted in the three sectors previously documented and published (see Mora et al. 2011):

- At the Platform sector -P-, the N assemblage was exhausted. This unit consisted of a pen deposit that extended throughout several levels assigned to Late and Early Neolithic periods. The upper level of P assemblage, assigned to Early Magdalenian, was also excavated.
- At the Ramp sector -R-, the excavation of S1 assemblage, containing several Late Middle Paleolithic levels, continued. An unknown stratigraphic context had been detected (called T) which provided an undefined Upper Paleolithic techno-complex, which could correspond to the Late Solutrean, a chrono-cultural period poorly known in the southern Pyrenees.
- The stratigraphic analysis of the Transition sector -T- continued. The interest of this test pit was in setting a correlation in this sector and sectors P and R.

Sectors P and R yielded lithic and bones artifacts assigned to Neolithic, Magdalenian, and Mousterian periods. It should be remarked that during this field season, a significant quantity of Magdalenian bone tools and marine ornaments were recovered. Furthermore, previously undocumented hearths from the Neolithic, Magdalenian, and Mousterian levels were excavated.

PEDAGOGY

Following the pedagogical structure established in 2012, students participated in lectures and field work. The formative part of the program included lectures related to the theoretical and

methodological elements of the project, stressing the importance of Cova Gran in the context of understanding human settlement in the southern Pyrenees during the past 50,000 years.

Students were introduced to all aspects related to fieldwork and lab analysis. A significant element of the field school was academic presentations at the site and in the lab. This allowed students to participate, understand, and evaluate daily work and enabled teams to make decisions during excavation activities.

The following topics were covered in lectures:

- Human settlement of the southern Pyrenees
- Introduction to Cova Gran artifact assemblages (classification and seriation)
- Fieldwork methodology
- The archaeological sequence of Cova Gran
- Site formation processes in Cova Gran
- Neanderthals at the south Pyrenees
- Middle /Upper Paleolithic “transition” in Cova Gran
- Late Glacial adaptations in Cova Gran
- Early farmers in the South of the Pyrenees

STUDENT CONTRIBUTION

Students were involved in every task related to the fieldwork and lab activities. They were considered an integral part of the archaeological team.

Talks about general lab work and tool classification were presented. The focus was on the classification and seriation elements of tool identification and the importance of context. Within a few days, students were able to work independently and conduct group discussions about object identification, function, and use. They acquired excavation skills, participated in digging, coordinating, selecting artifacts while screening, cleaning material, data base input, and discussions during lab work.

DISSEMINATION

Cova Gran is a long term project. Investigations are focused on diverse lines of research which has resulted in a vast line of presentations in workshops and publications in journals.

Last year has been published the following papers:

- Roy et al. 2013. Flint procurement in the Eastern Prepyrenees during the Early Upper Paleolithic: the 497C archaeological level of Cova Gran (Santa Linya, Lleida). *Trabajos de Prehistoria* 70 (1): 7-27. doi: 10.3989/tp.2013.12100. (In Spanish).
- Polo-Díaz et al. in press. Prehistoric herding facilities: site formation and archaeological dynamics in Cova Gran de Santa Linya (Southeastern Prepyrenees, Iberia). *Journal of Archaeological Science*.
- De la Torre et al. in press. Change and stasis in the Iberian Middle Palaeolithic. Considerations on the significance of Mousterian technological variability. *Current Anthropology*.

Also this year, we have participated in the following scientific workshops:

- Martínez-Moreno, J. et al. 40.000 años portando ornamentos marinos: la malacofauna de Cova Gran de Santa Linya (Prepirineo de Lleida). *III Reunión de Arqueomalacología de la Península Ibérica*. Cádiz, December 2012.
- Polo, A. et al. Neanderthals and Modern Humans at Cova Gran de Santa Linya (South-eastern Prepyrenees): Some microstratigraphic contributions to the understanding of the Middle/Upper Paleolithic Transition in the Iberian Peninsula. *Developing International Geoarchaeology conference 2013*. Basel, September 2013

- Polo, A. et al. Depósitos prehistóricos de redil en cueva y abrigo: una propuesta para su análisis e interpretación desde la microstratigrafía. Workshop: *El Cuaternario en la región pirenaica*. Bilbao, October 2013.
- Roy, M. et al. Sobre gentes y rocas: materias primas en la transición Paleolítico medio/superior en el nordeste de la Península Ibérica. *El Cuaternario en la región pirenaica*. Bilbao, October 2013.