

Field School for Quaternary Palaeoanthropology and Prehistory of Murcia, S.E. Spain, 32nd Field Season 2023

Murcian Association for the Study of Palaeoanthropology and the Quaternary, MUPANTQUAT, <http://www.mupantquat.com>

Session 1: June 30th-July 21st 2023 at Cueva Negra del Estrecho del Río Quípar
Session 2: July 21st-August 11th 2023 at Sima de las Palomas del Cabezo Gordo

Coordinated and directed by

Dr. Michael Walker, DPhil, BM, BCh, MA, DiplPreArch (Oxon), FSA, FRAI, FSAScot
 Former Chair (2010-2022) of MUPANTQUAT; archaeologist and physical anthropologist,
 Hon. Emeritus Professor, Murcia University Biology Faculty, mjwalke@gmail.com, walker@um.es;
 Dr Maria Haber Uriarte, archaeologist, Murcia University Dept. of Prehistory & Archaeology,
 Current Chair (from 2022) of MUPANTQUAT, mariahaber@pi-ma.es, mariahaber@um.es;
 and archaeologist Mariano López Martínez, Hon. Sec. of MUPANTQUAT,
marianolopez@hotmail.com, info@mupantquat.com



Cueva Negra hand-axe



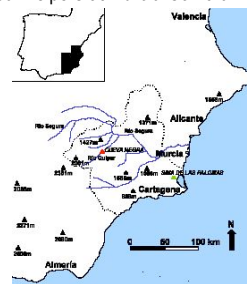
Sima de las Palomas
Neanderthal child skull

Excavation has been ongoing for 30 years at both sites. Cueva Negra has abundant evidence of fire, a final Early (i.e. Lower) Pleistocene fauna, an "Acheulian" hand-axe, numerous flake-tools, and extinct fauna in sediments laid down between 990,000 and 772,000 years ago (likely during an interglacial period 868,000-814,000 years ago), according to biostratigraphy, palaeomagnetism, and geophysical dating. Sima de las Palomas has >300 skeletal parts (teeth, bones) of 15 Neanderthal individuals, including 3 articulated skeletons one of which is 85% complete 55,000-50,000 years ago, an early Late (i.e., Upper) Pleistocene fauna, and Mousterian Palaeolithic artifacts, dated by ¹⁴C, U-ser, OSL and ESR, with new finds of Neanderthals teeth and mandible, fauna, and Mousterian artefacts in deep layers dated to 130,000-90,000 years ago.

We invite applicants to take part in our 2023 summer field season. *Covid vaccination certification is obligatory*. Thanks to vaccines, covid-19 will have abated enough in 2023 to allow our fieldwork as in 2022 (suspended in 2020 and 2021 because of the pandemic). All applicants are considered sympathetically; prior archaeological experience is less important than keenness. To apply, send an email with brief cv after going to our MUPANTQUAT web-page, clicking there on FIELD SCHOOL and then on "BRIEFING YOU" (there's no application form to fill in; we keep paperwork to a minimum). MUPANTQUAT (Murcian Association for the Study of Palaeoanthropology and the Quaternary) coordinates the Field School and excavations, issues your Certificate of Attendance, and makes you a member for the current year (we also sign forms you bring from your university).

While at Cueva Negra (Session 1) we stay at the residential Asacruz school (which has its own kitchen staff) at Caravaca de la Cruz. While at Sima de las Palomas (Session 2) we put bunks in the public school at Dolores de Pacheco and take our meals in the restaurant of the nearby Social Centre. Both schools have showers, cleaning staff, and concierges. We organise laundry at both places. Both schools give us some access (often erratic, alas) to wifi and internet. We can use the municipal public swimming pools at Caravaca and Dolores (which is also near the beach). 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, sun-glasses, sun-cream, swimmers. If you've an EU driver's licence (or otherwise an International Driving Permit), please bring it. Your contribution includes all meals and laundry.

We do not meet or set down helpers on days other than the start and finish dates of each session (Fridays). On those 3 Fridays we meet our helpers at Murcia-Corvera International Airport on the first day of each session and set them down on the last. Budget airlines fly to it from the UK and other countries. For Sima de las Palomas we can meet helpers at the Balsicas-Mar Menor railway station where trains stop that go to Cartagena; however, the newly-opened (December 20th, 2022), costly, high-speed "Ave" train service from Madrid **ends** at Murcia where you'll need to change to a train to Cartagena. The service of cheaper, slower, through trains from Madrid to Cartagena that call at Murcia and Balsicas-Mar Menor has been suspended temporarily: it may resume in 2023. Be aware that on *all* long-distance trains in Spain you *must* book a seat in advance (e.g., on-line at the RENFE website), and that Spanish railway time-tables usually change in May for the Summer. We do **not** meet rail travellers at Murcia "El Carmen" railway station that often is far too crowded for us to be able to guarantee finding you! So, if you arrive at it, take a taxi to Murcia "San Andrés" bus station (as walking to it with luggage takes about forty-five minutes) and then buses to Caravaca bus station for Session 1 or Torre Pacheco bus station for Session 2. If you arrive by plane at Madrid's Barajas Airport you can get a direct "Alsa" coach from the airport that leaves at 8.30 a.m. daily (you must book on-line beforehand at the ALSA website) and stops at Murcia bus station and then at Torre Pacheco bus station (alas, not at Caravaca bus station). Because air passengers arrive in great floods at Alicante International Airport (and, moreover, because flights arriving there are delayed often) we refuse to meet helpers there, as we are unable to guarantee finding you in the throng! You must buy a ticket at a stand in Alicante airport for the fast, frequent, coach service from it to Murcia bus station where then you must go to its ticket office and buy a ticket for the cheap service buses to the bus stations at Caravaca for Session 1 or Torre Pacheco for Session 2. Once you are on a bus from Murcia to either Caravaca or Torre Pacheco, phone us so that we can meet you at those bus stations. Buses leave Murcia for Caravaca hourly between 06.10 and 21.10 hours; the journey takes about an hour. Buses leave Murcia for Torre Pacheco roughly every 2 hours from 08.30 to 20.30 hours; the journey takes about 30 minutes.



Your contribution of 50€ (euros) per day for a complete 21-day session (1,050€ altogether) includes board, meals, instruction, local travel from pick-up point and back, daily travel between our base and site, official excursions, and your registration as a MUPANTQUAT member for the year 2023. If you come for two complete sessions your contribution is reduced to 45€ per day (1,890€ altogether). If you come for less than a complete session your contribution is 60€ per day. All former participants contribute at 45€ per day for whatever length of stay. Exceptionally, on a case-by-case basis, and provided that it does not produce numerical imbalance of helpers within a session, consideration may be given on occasions to allowing youngsters, who must justify impecunious circumstances and be first-time participants, to take part for 45€ per day (450€ altogether) during the first or second 10-day period of one session only (June30-July 9/10; July 9/10-July 21; July 21-July30/Aug1; July30/Aug1-August 11), though such participation means missing half of the 20-day programme of the session. All participants must pay for their own air/rail/coach/bus/taxi fares to our pick-up/set-down points and for their personal expenses.

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, there are talks and seminars about our work and human evolution, and we also visit local places of interest. The programme is thus based on a 3-week Session (if you stay for a shorter time, you'll miss part of the programme). The normal contribution from helpers staying for a full Session corresponds to €50 euros (€50) a day; covering instruction, board, lodging, and local transportation, or €45 a day when both full sessions are attended (first-time participants staying for less than one full session should contribute €60 a day). To guarantee a place you must send a non-returnable deposit, preferably by June 1st 2023, of €250 (euros) per each 7 days of intended stay. You pay the balance on arrival. You must arrange your own health and personal accident insurance cover beforehand, holiday/travel insurance if desired. EU residents should bring the EU card from their country entitling them to public health care in other EU Member States.

Cueva Negra del Estrecho del Río Quípar Sima de las Palomas

Cabezo Gordo and

