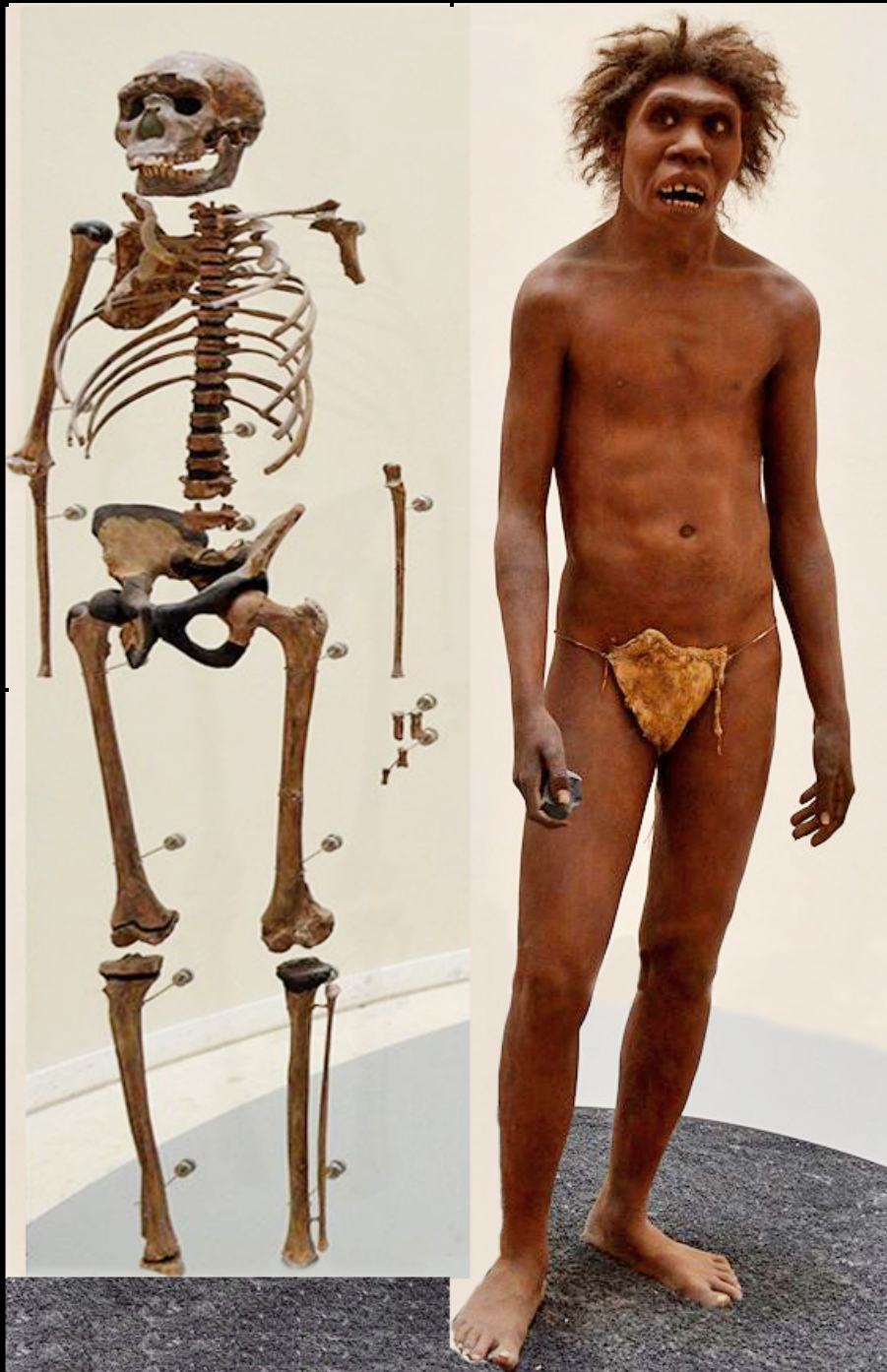


MUSEUM OF PREHISTORY OF LES EYZIES DE TAYAC

The Cro-Magnon's Temple

Les Eyzies-de-Tayac-Sireuil, Frankreich



Eine Foto-Dokumentation von Josef Rahm Otto

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The Cro-Magnon's Temple

WHERE IS IT?

Before leaving Dordogne, do not forget to visit the Museum of Les Eyzies. Located right in the center of the village, you will not have any difficulty to find it under the old castle. First, that will enable you to do a synthesis of all the visits of prehistoric sites which you had beforehand carried out in the area. Moreover, there you will see originals and reproductions of famous vestiges found at the time of the excavations from several french or foreign sites.

Recently, the museum increased, was modernized, thus instigated its visits and the exposure of many objects which are there preserved. To integrate in a modern architecture, a castle dating from the 16th century and a collection of prehistoric works was not in advance a bet won! Nevertheless, let be agreeably surprised by this marriage between the present and the past, forget your a priori in the cloakroom if you have some and meander for your greater pleasure in this reserved space to our dear Prehistoric human beings, open your eyes wide, rocked by a soft background music of stones knocking against one another...

WHAT DO WE SEE THERE?

Thus, since July 2004, the Museum is seen equipped with a new course for any public, punctuated by audio-visual ones, interactive consoles and at your disposal, explanatory cards in English and in French. You will discover there mouldings and models but also prehistoric reconstitutions of humans and animals nowadays have disappeared (dermoplasties).

You will have the occasion to admire more than 1.800 parts from traditional collections which were until now exposed in the old castle and also, new acquisitions. Some are coming from the National Antiquities Museum of Saint Germain en Laye's collections as the series of the objects of **La Madeleine site** and **the lamp of Lascaux Cave**...

The bipedy having appeared before the manufacture of the stone tools, we begin our visit while following a corridor cut in the cliff rock and by walking on **"the No Laetoli"**. It is about the reconstitution of two tracks of fossilized footprints comprising 54 traces of human steps coming from the East of Large Rift Valley in Tanzania.

At the end of this alley, **"the Teenager of the Lake Turkana"** is welcoming us. This dermoplasty realized by very talented **Elizabeth Daynes**, introduce us to a child 10 years old, measuring 1,60 meters, discovered in August 1984. Its proportions are identical to those of the current inhabitants in South Sudan. However, its cranial capacity is only of 88 cm³, he is an **Homo Ergaster** or may be an **Homo Erectus**.

Then, we symbolically go up time until the human origins and we take a surmounted by a well of light staircase: **“The Well of the Time”** presenting stratigraphic cuts of various known sites.

On second floor, we are in a department explanatory about the various methods of dating of carbon 12,13 and 14, **“Keys of Reading of Prehistoric Times”** learning to us with better apprehending the methods of dating of the archaeologists. Indeed, carbon is one of the essential components of the living organisms and it is thanks to it, that it is possible to date for example from bones or charcoal pieces.

Then, we arrive in front of **a very impressive megaceros**, which lived beginning of the Quaternary age, towards - 2 million years until the end of the last ice age to - 10.000 years ago. The foliage of this animal could exceed 3 meters of scale! The reconstitution of this large cervidae, disappeared nowadays, is completely remarkable.

Further, first settlements in the Vézère Valley during 400.000 years as in all Europe are presented. In the window **“the Wire of Time”** here we approach the development in technologies and the tools used by Prehistoric people. Several periods of Paleolithic age are exposed: Mousterian, Aurignacian, Perigordian... until the Bronze Age.

Still at second level, various specific spaces are devoted to the great periods of Prehistory: **“Neandertal Time”** with in a window, others Elizabeth Daynes’s wonderful dermoplasties, **“Modern Human Appearance”**, his activities and his bone works, **“End of Glacial Time”**. To see in purpose **the engraved block of vulvas from Castanet Shelter...**

Reconstituted **bison of the steppes skeletons** found in Dordogne, of a reindeer and an antelope saïga from Charente decorate these spaces as well as the moulding of a woolly rhinoceros, dated to - 30.000. years, such as it were found in permafrost, were lengthened and reversed.

Lastly, to evoke the human groups movements in Aquitanian area, a large model is exposed at the end of the gallery.

On the third floor, various zones of activities in a prehistoric habitat are reconstituted:

- collection of materials from cliffs, in forest, at the edge of water...
- fishing using harpoons
- hunting with the use of spear with engine
- a cutting flint workshop during Solutrean and Aurignacian
- fireplaces thanks to objects put in situation by archaeological grounds mouldings.

These elements have a great importance to include/understand the everyday life during Prehistory and to give an right idea about the techniques improved by our ancestors to survive in their environment and their evolution during centuries.

At the end of this gallery, another attractive section and which still preserves all its mysteries, “**Alive ones and Dead ones**” with windows presenting various objects:

- a paleolithic ornament in shells and animal teeth
- the burial of **the Child of La Madeleine**,
- the famous **Bison of La Madeleine**
- symbolic expression blocks with animals, vulvas, figurations, diagrammatic women silhouettes engraved
- The archaeological furniture of the sanctuary with moulding of **La Chaire à Calvin** presenting horses, lamps, human prints...

Documentary on the parietal art from Font de Gaume cave is inviting us to make an halt and to re-examine in detail the drawings of the cavity which are very beautiful.

To finish, do not forget to climb on the esplanade in overhang. You will have from there very beautiful sight on the roofs of the village, the Vézère river and the neighbourhoods. Moreover, you will be able to approach the Paul Darné's modern sculpture “**Homo Neandertalis**” who dominates the landscape and even to take you in picture in his company if you want to...

“EXTRA” OF THE MUSEUM

- visits in English language
- groups visits
- temporary exposures
- various activities and conferences during summer time
- Company of the Friends of the Museum of Prehistory (SAMRA)
- a shop with postcards, posters, books, jewels, plays, toys...

INFORMATION

July and August: opened every day from 9h30 to 18h30 without interruption
June and September: opened from 9h30 to 18h without interruption. Closed on Tuesday

October to May: opened from 9h30 to 12h30 and from 14h00 to 17h30. Closed on Tuesday

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Patricia MILAN (July 2005)



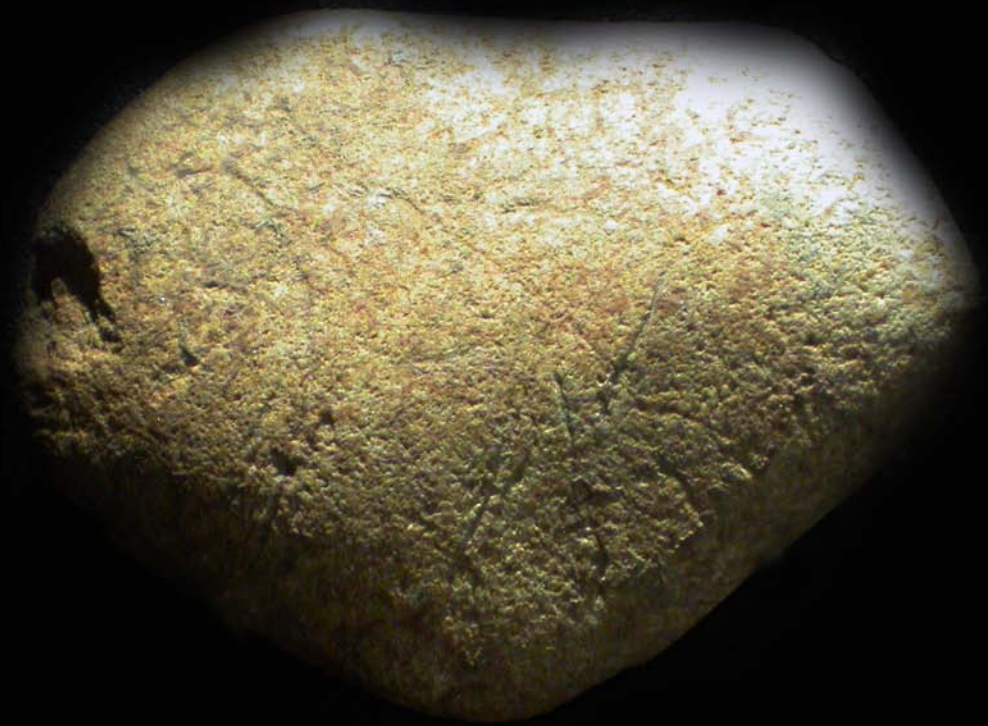


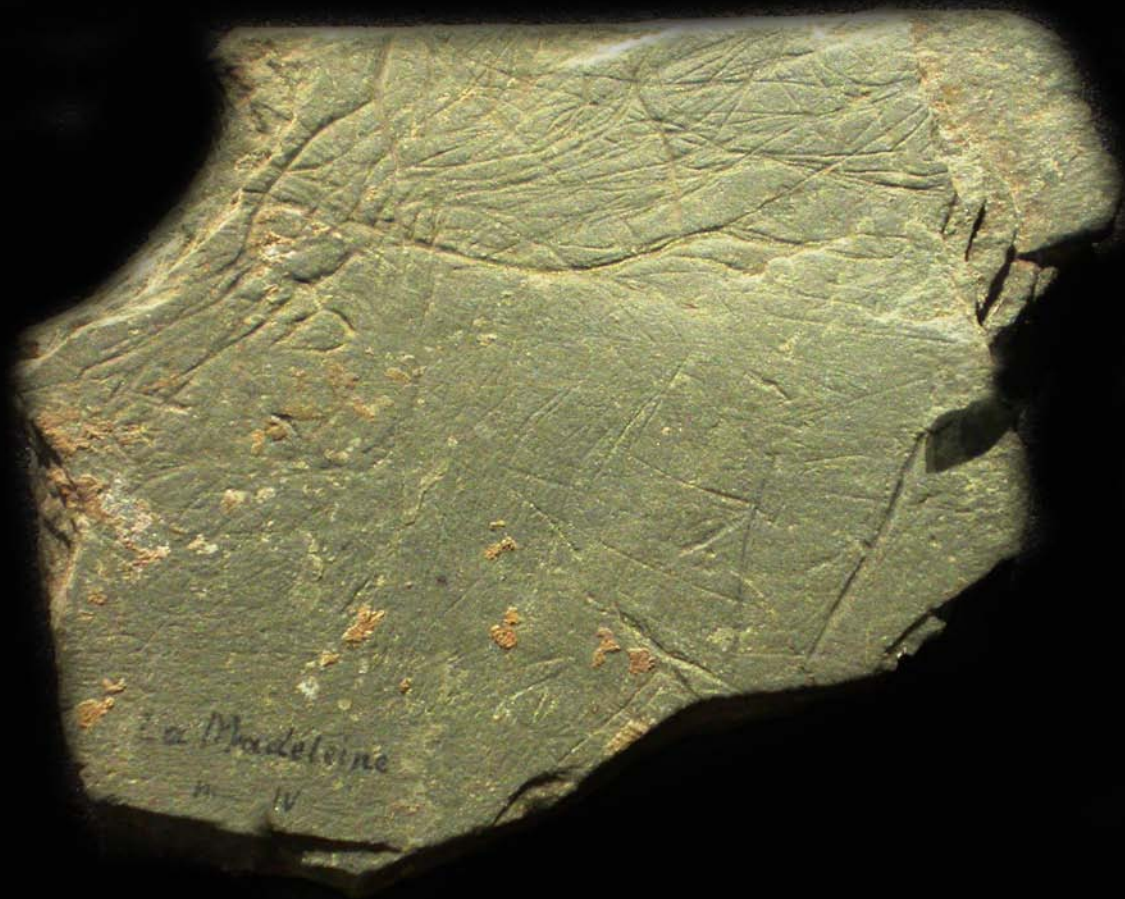












La Madeleine

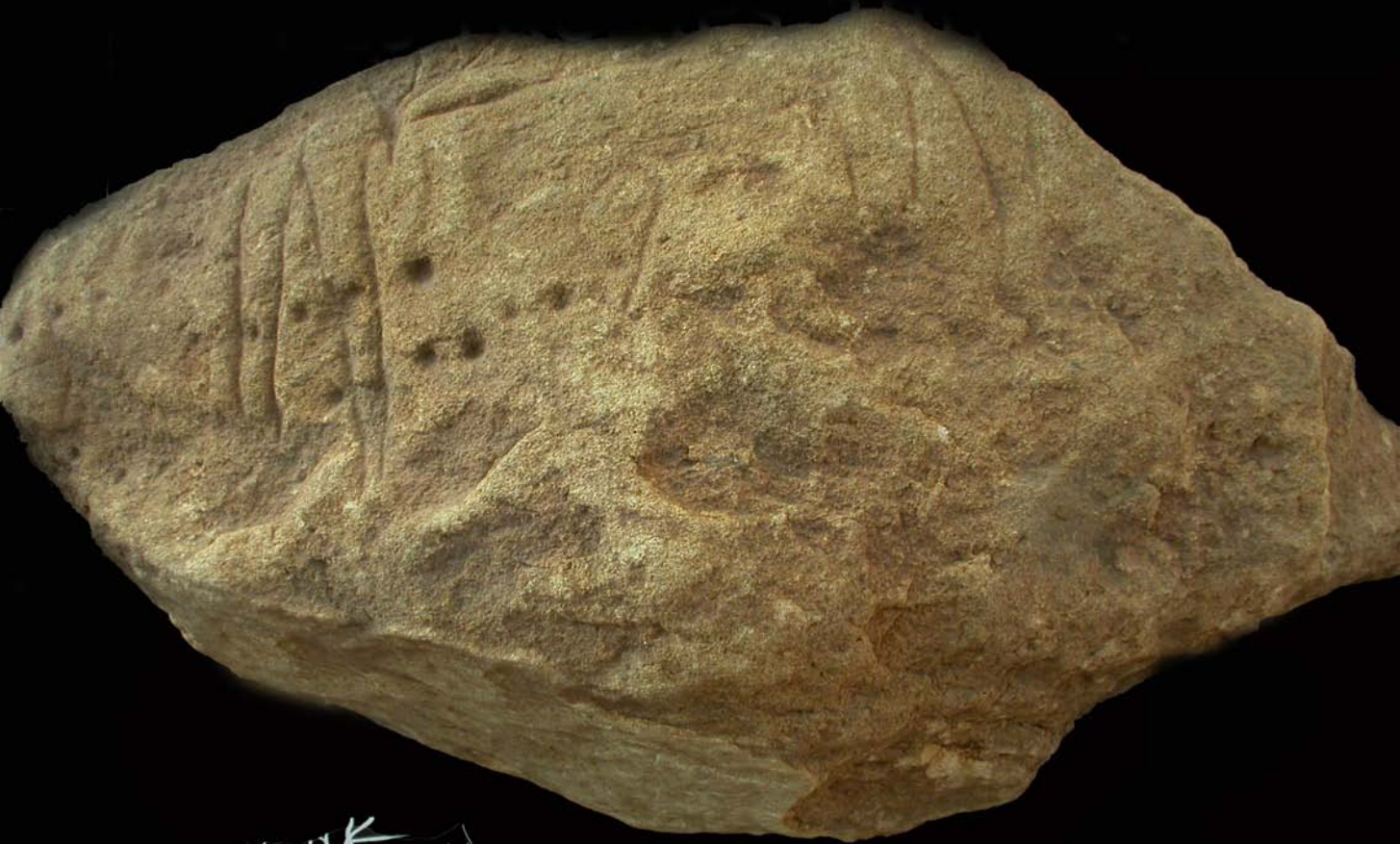
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