



CAUNE DE L'ARAGO, Tautavel, Pyrénées-Orientales, France
Middle Pleistocene – Lower Palaeolithic – 690 000 to 90 000 years ago
Practical aspects of the excavation
2017

The excavation of the Caune de l'Arago is open in 2017 from May 15th to August 31st.
Participants should **be over 18** and must stay at the excavation for **at least 2 weeks (4 weeks recommended)**.

The site is open to **students and researchers in Geoarchaeology, Prehistory, Palaeontology, Palaeoanthropology, Archaeology** and connected disciplines. It is open, to some extent, to volunteers without prior excavation experience. After sending a motivation letter and a CV, all applicants must complete the individual form, add a copy of their European Health Insurance Card or another insurance certificate, and wait for registration confirmation before arriving on site.
Nobody will be accepted on site without written registration confirmation.

A good physical condition is required to participate as the climate may be wet and cold in May, very hot in July and August. Climbing up to the cave (+80 m), excavating in uncomfortable positions, sieving... are also demanding. An **up-to-date tetanus vaccination** is required at the time of your arrival on site. Please notify us of any allergies, dietary or other (plants, insects), and of any particular health problems (vertigo, blood pressure problems ...) that could interfere with your stay at the site or require any special safety precautions or care administration.

Postal address of the excavation: Caune de l'Arago - Centre Européen de Recherches Préhistoriques -
Avenue Léon-Jean Grégory - 66 720 Tautavel - France
Base camp (Gouleyrous mill) **phone number**: +33 (0)4 68 29 18 42 from May 15th to August 31st.
Phone number of the Centre Européen de Recherches Préhistoriques in Tautavel : +33 (0)4 68 29 47 40.

The base camp of the excavation site (an old mill and a campsite) is located below the Caune de l'Arago, at the Gouleyrous gorge outlet, halfway (about 3 km) between the villages of Tautavel and Vingrau (30 km NW of Perpignan). It is located beside the river and the cave is 80 m higher, at the foot of the cliff. The cave is quite open and excavations take place with natural light.

To reach the site, from Perpignan train station (SNCF), walk down Charles de Gaulle avenue and take **bus line n° 12 at Jeantet Violet bus stop** at Place de Catalogne (http://mod.ctmp Perpignan.com/pdf/pdf_lignes/Ligne12.pdf) towards Tautavel or Vingrau: departures at 7:33 a.m., 9:25 a.m., 11:01 a.m., 12:15 p.m., 13:55 p.m., 16:00 p.m., 18:10 p.m. and 19:10 p.m. **all year long from Monday to Saturday except bank holidays**. Ask the driver if it is possible to get off at Gorges des Gouleyrous, 3 km after Tautavel, 2 km before Vingrau terminus. On **Sundays and bank holidays**, departures are on demand at 10:40 a.m. and 18:45 p.m. from Place de Catalogne: **prior booking is required**, at least one day before your trip, by phoning +33 (0) 800 800 370 (transport on demand - TAD). Note that the ca. hour-long drive is only 1.1 €. Up to date bus schedules (choose Tautavel – line 12): <http://www.ctmp Perpignan.com/387-Quel-bus-dans-ma-ville-3F.html>

The municipal campsite is reserved for excavators and you must bring your own equipment (tent, sleeping bag...). The laboratory provides camping accommodation and food free of charge. Travel costs are not covered by the laboratory. Working hours are 8am-12am and 14h-18h 6 days a week. Meals are eaten together at 7:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 19:30 p.m. Participants take turns in preparing the meals and washing the dishes. There is no Internet connexion at the base camp (mobiles and 3G keys are ok) nor washing machine at the camp site.

Every morning from 8 to 9 a.m., a small talk inform or remind excavators about the methods used at the Caune de l'Arago (excavation techniques, identification of faunal or lithic materials, geoarchaeology, geochronology, palynology, palaeoanthropology...) and to present the latest research on the Caune de l'Arago in its context. The day's activities include excavation in the cave, washing and marking prehistoric finds, sieving and sorting sediment. They may also include drawing stratigraphic sections, restoring bone material and working on the museum collections of the Research Centre in Tautavel.

The **2017 campaign** is planned over three different sectors:

- the excavation of the last remaining areas of level G = level of hunters of large mammals (Horse, Mouflon, Deer, Tahr, Bison, Musk Ox, Rhinoceros...) in which most of the *Homo heidelbergensis* remains have been found, base of MIS 12, about 450,000 years old,
- excavation of level Q = level of hunters of large mammals (Horse, Reindeer, Bison, Mouflon,...) in which a lithic industry relatively rich in bifaces has been found, base of MIS 14, about 550,000 years old
- digging down to the lower stratigraphical complex in the central part of the cave.

Excavations at the Caune de l'Arago began in 1964 under the direction of Professor Henry de Lumley and have continued since then every year under his supervision and the successive directions of Marie-Antoinette de Lumley, Anne-Marie Moigne and now Christian Perrenoud.

A research centre and a major museum have been built in Tautavel to preserve and study the material from the Caune de l'Arago and other sites, to teach higher education Masters courses (University of Perpignan Masters) and to diffuse scientific information.

Feel free to request additional information by email (christian.perrenoud@mnhn.fr) or by phone +33 (0)4 68 38 31 14 and visit <http://www.tautavel.culture.gouv.fr> and www.450000ans.com for example.



A - Caune de l'Arago location (circle), 80 m above Gouleyrous mill which is used as base camp for the excavation. The municipal campsite, reserved for the excavators, is further on the right.

B - Level G excavation sector, where zones close to one cave wall are still to be excavated. This 450 000 years old level (base of MIS 12) consists of a 40 cm thick accumulation of archaeological material: lithic industry, faunal and human remains, stones...

C - Level Q sector, in the front of the cave, excavated in quincunx. This level with mostly Horse, Reindeer, Bison and Mouflon bone remains, is located at the base of Middle Stratigraphical Complex and thus correlated to the beginning of isotopic stage 14, i.e. around 550 000 years ago.

D - Lowest excavation sector where few tens of centimetres remain to be dug before reaching the Lower Stratigraphic Complex. Excavation will then stop in this part of the cave. In the background, level Q excavation sector. Photograph taken from the level G excavation sector.