

Anatomically Modern Humans (AMH), like us, arrived some 45 thousand years ago to the Western Carpathians. Their appearance in Europe contributed to the extinction of the Neanderthal population that lived in Europe by that time already over for 250,000 years. In archaeology, human remains such as burials are rare and therefore the human made artifacts represent their makers. It is widely known that the stone tools of the AMH population sharply differ from the tools of the Neanderthals. A fortunate situation is when human remains and their artifacts are found together. According to the Upper Palaeolithic (a period between 45 and 13 thousand years ago) finds of Europe, the first surely modern human artifacts belong to the Aurignacian culture. Parallel with the spread of this culture, the Neanderthal population dwindled and went extinct. There are several theories to explain why this happened. One says there was an evolutionary competition between the two human species and the better won, the nature selected the one which organized better its survival strategy during the glacial climate in Europe. This means that AMH and Neanderthals might have practiced the everyday life, exploited and utilized their milieu differently. Since understanding Neanderthal life ways gains more attention than the earliest AMH in Eastern Central Europe, this project aims at revealing strategies of survival and subsistence of the AMH in the Western Carpathians. There are only a few sites which can provide sufficient data to answer this question. These are especially cave sites, and unfortunately, many of them were almost completely excavated and nothing left to give us the evidences we need. However, there is a cave called Istállóskő in Hungary, which preserved the settlement of AMH in two layers and included a set of important findings such as bone and stone tools, the bones of the hunted animals, fire places with the wood they burned, artistical objects, a flute made of cave bear bone, and a human tooth. Basically, all the information needed to study the practice of everyday life of the earliest AMH in the Western Carpathians. The project will run a new excavation season at the site applying modern excavation methods, thus no finds can be missed and we will be able to learn how modern humans lived between 39 and 32 thousand years ago. The results will shed light upon the differences between AMH and Neanderthals, and eventually better highlight the winning factor that helped AMH populate Europe and forced Neanderthals to go extinct.