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Creative Communications

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3819-33 Chestnut Street

Philadelphia, PA 19104-3106

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From the Editor

THIS WINTER'S *EXPEDITION* is a special issue on Caves! Spanning the globe from Mesoamerica to Borneo and ranging in time from the Paleolithic in Europe to Australia's modern Aboriginal peoples, six feature articles present recent archaeological and anthropological research undertaken in caves and rock shelters. We begin near the top of the Old World, in Tibet, where we explore caves as sacred places in Buddhist and pre-Buddhist thought. We then head down toward sea level to northern Borneo in Island Southeast Asia to re-excavate the Neolithic cemeteries at Niah Cave and learn about the lifestyle of early agriculturalists. From there we journey far back in time and deep into Europe's Paleolithic caves to grasp why early Europeans visited these remote spaces. Still in Europe, but now near the Adriatic Sea, at the edge of history and the Classical World, we share the wonder of discovery at Nakovana Cave as archaeologists unravel the ritual behavior recently uncovered there. Next, we travel to the New World to illustrate how the pan-Mesoamerican focus on caves as sacred spaces provides scholars with excellent evidence to understand ancient Mesoamerican religion. Finally, we jump to Australia to encounter aboriginal caves and rock art and glimpse the Aboriginal spirit world, the home of Ancestral Beings, Rainbow Serpents, and Dynamic Figures.

This issue also introduces you to the Curator of the Museum's European Archaeology Section, appropriately enough, a scholar who excavates cave sites to understand Neandertal behavior. From the American Section, one of our research associates highlights a ritual vessel found in a Maya cave and discusses its relation to monkeys and chocolate, and from the Archives you will learn about a controversial 'discovery' in Mexico 50 years ago, the role the Museum played in debunking it, and then inadvertently giving it a brief, albeit mistaken, credibility.

We also offer a short article about ongoing research on the origins of pastoralism in East Africa, undertaken by the Museum's MASCA staff in collaboration with their Kenyan colleagues. As usual, our Museum Mosaic will inform you about some of the Museum's recent and upcoming events. We always welcome feedback and hope you find this special issue on Caves worth sharing with your family and friends. Also check out our website (<http://www.museum.upenn.edu/expedition>), now featuring more than 60 percent of our past content since *Expedition's* first appearance in 1958! 🏠

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James R. Mathieu".

JAMES R. MATHIEU, PH.D.

Editor