Ice Age archaeology has a special fascination, for it was during this time that our ancestors became fully human, both biologically and fully moral. Europe and fully moral. Europe and fully moral. Every European has a direct role in the history of Ice Age studies. It was in Europe that the discovery of tools with the bones of extinct animals demonstrated the "antiquity" of human presence, and it was in Europe that the basic chronology of human occupation was laid for the work that has followed. This may have given us a distorted view of human history. There is reason to suspect that Europe was a rather atypical backwater during much of the Ice Age. Moreover, the continent was simply too cold and inhospitable for our earliest ancestors to inhabit, so the habitation of Europe begins long after that of Africa or Asia. Still, the later stages of human evolution are better known from Europe than anywhere else, and Ice Age Europe is a fascinating place to study—all the more so because experts still disagree about such fundamental questions as how long ago the biology and intelligence of our ancestors became equal to our own—or even whether early Europeans survived into the later Ice Ages or were replaced by newcomers from Africa.

This issue of Expedition differs in its organization from many others. All the authors have worked together to give the reader a coordinated picture of Ice Age Europe. The article first sets the stage with an introduction to Ice Age climates and conditions. Harold Dibble then provides an introduction to paleolithic archaeology that serves as a framework for the articles that follow. Nancy Minugh-Purvis describes the people of Ice Age Europe as known from their fossil remains and discusses the scientific debates concerning how to interpret them; Randall White presents the most spectacular aspect of Ice Age archaeology, the art of the European Upper Paleolithic; and, in the final article, I consider one of the most elusive of all the origins, the natural languages.