

Neanderthal home made of mammoth bones discovered in Ukraine

December 19 2011, by Bob Yirka



The Reconstruction of the Funeral of Homo neanderthalensis. Captured in the Hannover Zoo. (Via Wikipedia)

(PhysOrg.com) -- Up till recently, most researchers studying Neanderthals had assumed they were simple wanderers, hiding out in caves when the weather got bad. Now however, the discovery of the underpinnings of a house built by a group of Neanderthals, some 44,000 years ago, turns that thinking on its head. Discovered by a team of French archeologists from the Muséum National d'Histories Naturelle, in an area that had been under study since 1984, the home, as it were, was apparently based on mammoth bones. The team's findings are to be published in the science journal [Quaternary International](#).

Over the past decade, new information regarding Neanderthals, a human ancestor that died out approximately 30,000 years ago, has come to light

that tends to reverse decades of thinking. Instead of a clumsy, dim-witted people, it appears Neanderthals were more advanced than most had thought. Evidence of cooking, burying their dead, making jewelry and perhaps even speaking to one another has come to light indicating that first assumptions were a little harsh. Now, with the [discovery](#) of a home built by Neanderthals, it's clear they were far more sophisticated than anyone had imagined.

The home was apparently built in two parts. The lower part, or base, was made by assembling large mammoth bones to support the whole structure, which was 26 feet across at its widest. The bones themselves were likely obtained both through collecting those found on the ground and by killing the large beasts directly themselves. The Neanderthals who built the structure also obviously lived in it for quite some time as 25 different hearths were found inside. The researchers suggest that the house was once topped by wood or other material the builders were able to find.

The house was found in eastern Ukraine, believed to be the oldest known built of bones, near the town of Molodova, a place that doesn't have much in the way of trees, thus the Neanderthals who built the house were demonstrating an ability to live in a rather barren place, living in homes they'd constructed while cooking and eating mammoth to survive. It also suggests that [Neanderthals](#) were capable of working and living together in groups in established communities.

Perhaps even more interesting was the fact that some of the bones used to build the house had decorative carvings and added pigments, clearly showing that those that built the [house](#), were in fact, building a home.

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