

A Scientific Portal for French Virtual Archaeology

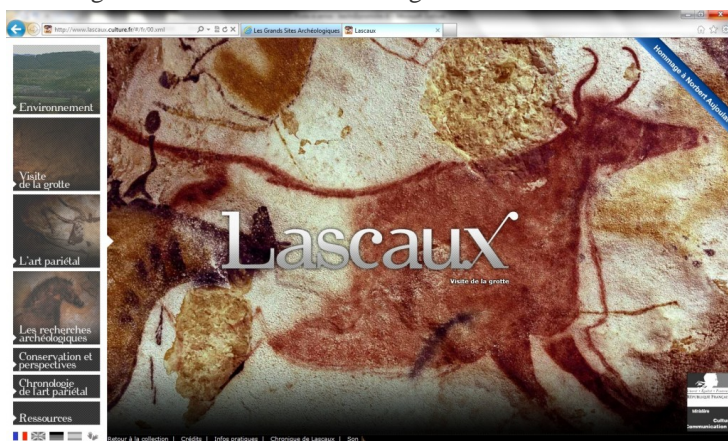
From Prehistory to the Middle Ages, history and the lives of men in times past are presented by the most accomplished of specialists, in a presentation accessible to everyone. The collection is edited by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication and it is going to be enriched regularly, in order to achieve a complete assortment of virtual archaeology until modern age. The portal <http://www.grands-sites-archeologiques.culture.fr/> collects and give access to several very appealing websites, with nice colors, good animations and sounds, flash application. Most of them contain virtual visits to the displayed sites, with easy-to-use systems and swift texts, thus offering very good resources for learning.



The collection is dedicated both to scientists and amateurs, and features a special focus on education. Students of any age are able to find general information and research materials, while teachers can make use of the collection as a tool for a deeper knowledge transfer to their pupils. The high scientific quality of the content is supported by a multilingual approach: French and English and occasionally others (arabic, rumanian, spanish and the sign language in the videos).

Three of the websites are especially useful for examining European prehistory and provide interactive, in-depth explorations into prehistoric caves: Cave of Chauvet Pont d'Arc, Cave of Lascaux, and Underwater Archaeology. The Chauvet Cave and the Lascaux Cave sites are organized similarly, centered around a virtual tour of the caves.

The Lascaux website (the original website dates back 1998) was recently reworked in both form and content, reflecting the latest advances in archaeological research and digital visualization. The virtual tour presents a [three dimensional digital](#) version of the cave, and allows the users to go from room to room, completely immersed in the site. As they travel along the walls, they can stop at each image and read descriptions, play video sequences and examine the painting as much closer as possible thanks to the zoom. Beside the virtual tour, the website features other resources: video sequences about the Neolithic artists and archeological research on the cave, thousands of documents photographs, drawings, sound recordings, [3D animations](#), maps and much more including teaching data sheets and educational games.



Also the Chauvet Cave website is based on a virtual tour with many enlargeable images, accompanied by detailed explanations. These images show the cave paintings, as well as the natural archaeological material in the caves, such as fossils and footprints. The sites also include secondary-source material about the caves' discovery and archaeological explorations.

?Underwater Archaeology? presents a wealth of information on undersea exploration and shipwreck excavation, including secondary-source information on diving suits and underwater excavation sites from prehistory to the present.

Other resources include:

?Prehistoric Hunter, Tautavel man?: the website gives a wide overview about The Tautavel Man, based on the research of archaeological discovery in the Pyrenees (human skull dating back 450,000 years). Information and reconstructions will help the visitor to learn about the habits of prehistoric men, raw materials and tools, environment, climate, flora and fauna of the ancient times.

?From Saqqara to the Louvre, Mastaba of Akhethétep?: in 1903, the decorated temple from the tomb of the Egyptian Prince Akhethetep, has been transported to the Louvre. An on-line visit proposes CG images of the architecture of the monument, a panoramic of the vault with its carved decoration, and an interactive translation of the hieroglyphs, photographs and diagrams.

?Megaliths in Morbihan?: through a comprehensive visit to the four major monuments: Carnac, Locmariaquer, Gavrinis and the Petit-Mont d'Arzon, the art of Neolithic Age sculptors, and the framework of their life and civilization is explored in encyclopedic detail.

?Life along the Danube?: In original illustrations, graphs, images and their descriptions, life during the Chalcolithic and Neolithic periods in prehistoric villages on the Harsova Tell is reconstructed through research from the Franco-Romanian collaboration. And there's much more to learn and to discovery. The portal <http://www.grands-sites-archeologiques.culture.fr/> is constantly growing and enlarging with new productions.