A000-**Eur-Germany-Vogelherdhöhle-Figurine-***Panthera leo spelaea***-Layer IV-Ivory-Mid. Paleolithic-ca 40-20 kya**



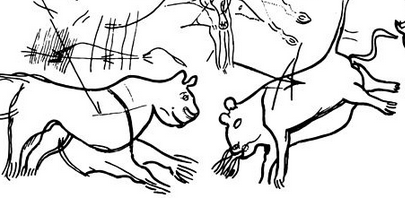
Fig. 1-2. **Germany-Vogelherdhöhle-Figurine-***Panthera leo spelaea*-Layer IV**-Ivory-Middle Paleolithic-**40,000 BP-29,000 BP, recto and verso, replica.

**Formal Label: Germany-Vogelherdhöhle-Figurine-***Panthera leo spelaea***-Layer IV-Ivory-Middle Paleolithic-**40,000 BP-29,000 BP

**Display description:**

**This mammoth-ivory figurine of a** *Panthera leo spelaea,* or Eurasian Cave Lion, **dates to** 40,000 BP-29,000 BP. The figurine has **shape of a lion when hunting with its legs stretched as if to spring on its prey.** It was excavated in Vogelherdhöhle (“Bird-Heart Cave”), which was probably named for the ability of the Lone River to attract birds and the heart-like structure of the cave itself, since it has three cave chambers like a heart. The cave is among the most important German Paleolithic sites. It is located on a sloping limestone ledge 20 m above the Lone River Valley over which it possessed a strategic 180o view for hunters of Pleistocene gam.

**It conforms to the general shape of the** *Panthera leo spelaea* **in Lascaux.**



 **cm**

**Fig. 3** *Panthera leo spelaea,* Lascaux Cave, Dordogne, France, from Leroi-Gourhan and Allain 1979.

**Accession Number:**

**LC Classification:** GN772.2.A8

**Date or Time Horizon:** 40,000 BP-29,000 BP

**Geographical Area: Vogelherdhöhle Site, Germany**

**Map, GPS Coordinates:** 48.561321, 10.189116



Fig. 4. Location of Vogelherdhöhle in the local landscape.

Fig. 5. Location of Vogelherdhöhle in Germany.

**Cultural Affiliation:** Aurignacian

**Medium:** original, mammoth ivory; museum replica in resin.

**Dimensions:   
Weight:**

**Provenance: University of Tübingen.**

**Condition:** museum replica in resin**.**

**Discussion:**

On 23 May 1931 Hermann Mohn, a private researcher from Heidenheim, while probing the hills near Stetten bei Niederstotzingen for prehistoric remains, found flint artifacts in the rear of a badger den. He informed the prehistory department of the University of Tübingen of a potential Paleolithic cave, which he named ‘Mohnloch’ or Mohn’s hole.’ The Tübingen department, unimpressed, sent a junior researcher, Gustav Riek, to Stetten to inspect the site. The Y-shaped cave has three openings (S, SW and N) and covers 170 m2. Mohn and Riek squeezed through the 30 cm x 40 cm opening into the badger den and on the evening of the second day they found the Paleolithic evidence they were looking for: Mohn’s hunch was right, this was confirmed and the site was renamed “Vogelherdhöhle,” “Bird Heart Cave,” probably for the waters of the Lone River attracting birds and the cave’s three chambers like a heart. Then, in just three months, Riek had excavated the cave, with large back-fill mounds looming outside the three entrances still holding artifacts yet to be discovered but now without any context. In the intervening years these mounds have been thoroughly re-examined and many artifacts have been recovered.

There are four Middle Paleolithic strata and four Upper Paleolithic strata of Vogelherdhöhle of which two of the latter, layers V and VI belong to the Aurignacian, which are the cultural strata for which Vogelherdhöhle is famous and in which the present artifact was found. (The Magdalenian is represented in two layers, the Gravettian is not present --as in almost all the cave sites of Lone River Valley--and the Neolithic affords the final evidence of human presence.)

Eleven ivory figurines were excavated by Reik. The lower Aurignacian layer V supplied a total of seven figurines, including a *Panthera leo spelaea* or Eurasian Cave Lion, *Equus ferus przewalskii*, a complete mammoth, parts of a large mammoth (including the neck, femur, and haunches), an unidentified headless animal and an unidentified animal with a head reattached in 2012 (Conard et al., 2013). Four figurines from the upper layer IV include this *Panthera leo spelaea*, a steppe bison, a mammoth and Eurasian Cave Lion-man. Since these layers in which each figurine was excavated is known, it is unfortunate that Riek gave no indication of their exact positions and contexts.

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