Cinq millions d'années, l'aventure humaine - Five Million Years, the Human Adventure
M. Toussaint éd., E.R.A.U.L. 56, 1992, Liège, pp. 199-205.

New Discoveries of Palaeolithic Human Remains in Italy

Nouvelles découvertes de restes humains paléolithiques en Italie

Giacomo Giacobini *

Abstract

New human fossil remains have recently been discovered in Italy. There are Neandertal remains as well as two Upper Palaeolithic graves. The Neandertals are represented by rather fragmentary evidence : some few isolated teeth and some cranial elements coming from the Fumane shelter (Verona, Northern Italy), from the Ciota Ciara cave (Monte Fenara, Borgosesia, Northern Italy), from the caverna delle Fate (Finale Ligure, Northern Italy), and from Grotta Breuil (Monte Circeo, Central Italy). One of the two Upper Palaeolithic graves was discovered in the Gravettian layers of the Paglicci cave (Foggia, Southern Italy) and the other in the final Epigravettian layers of the Vilabruna shelters (Val Rosna, Belluno, Northern Italy).

Résumé

De nouveaux fossiles humains ont été récemment découverts en Italie. Il s'agit de quelques restes néandertaliens et de deux sépultures du Paléolithique supérieur. Les Néandertaliens sont représentés par des documents assez fragmentaires : quelques dents isolées et quelques éléments crâniens, provenant de l'abri de Fumane (Verone, Italie du Nord), de la grotte Ciota Ciara (Monte Fenera, Borgosesia, Italie du Nord), de la caverne delle Fate (Finale Ligure, Italie du Nord) et de la grotte Breuil (Monte Circeo, Italie centrale). Les deux sépultures du Paléolithique supérieur ont été découvertes, l'une dans les niveaux gravettiens de la grotte Paglicci (Foggia, Italie du Sud) et l'autre dans l'un des couches de l'Epigravettien final des abris Villabruna (Val Rosna, Belluno, Italie du Nord).

Key words : Italy, Neandertals, *Homo sapiens sapiens*, graves.

Mots clés : Italie, Néandertaliens, Hommes modernes, sépultures.

Introduction

Inventories of Italian Lower and Middle Palaeolithic human fossils as well as new discoveries of more recent remains were communicated at the 2nd Congress of the International Association for the Study of Human Paleontology, organised in Turin in 1987 (Mallegni, 1989; Giacobini and Mallegni, 1989). This paper is intended to present some Middle and Upper Palaeolithic remains recently discovered in Italy but not included in the above-mentioned articles. No hominid fossils associated with Lower Palaeolithic material have been discovered in Italy since the publication of Mallegni's article (1989). In 1988, Fabbri *et al.* (1988) published an up-date of the Italian Palaeolithic human remains discovered or identified since the publication of

* Giacomo Giacobini, Sezione di Paleontologia Umana, Dipartimento di Anatomia e Fisiologia Umana, Corso M. d'Azeglio, 52, 10126 Torino, Italy

the Catalogue of Fossil Hominids (Oakley *et al.*, 1971). Some of the remains presented here (e.g., the Neandertals from the Caverna delle Fate) have already been listed by Fabbri *et al.* (1988); others were discovered more recently.

Middle Palaeolithic

1. Fumane

The Mousterian deposit of the rockshelter of Fumane (Valpolicella, Verona) (fig.1 and fig. 2) has been excavated since 1988 under the direction of A. Broglio and M. Cremaschi (Universities of Ferrara and Milan) (for references and information on previous work at this site, see Cremaschi *et al.*, 1986; some preliminary results of recent excavations are provided by Broglio *et al.*, 1987-88a and by the *Istituto Italiano di Preistoria e Protostoria* bulletin, 1990). Several Mousterian layers are present in this very rich and thick deposit (which also contains some Aurignacian layers), associated with an important faunal assemblage, mainly represented by *Cervus elaphus*, *Capreolus capreolus* and *Capra ibex*. Bones were highly fragmented with frequent cutmarks.

In September 1989, one isolated human tooth, indicated as Fumane 1, was discovered at the base of layer A11 (layers A1-A3 were Aurignacian; layer A4 contained Aurignacian and Uluzzian implements; layers A5 - downwards were Mousterian). Fumane 1 (fig. 3), a decidual lower molar (right lower dm2), is not significantly larger than the corresponding tooth of a modern child (dimensions : MD = 9.4 mm; BL = 10.1 mm; index of robustness = 94.94). The only other northern Italian Neandertal tooth which may be compared with Fumane 1 (one left lower dm2 from Caverna delle Fate, Finale Ligure) has an even lower index of robustness (87.72). In Fumane 1, the root is almost completely missing. The morphology (erosion surface) of its small surviving part demonstrates that the tooth was physiologically lost during change of the deci-

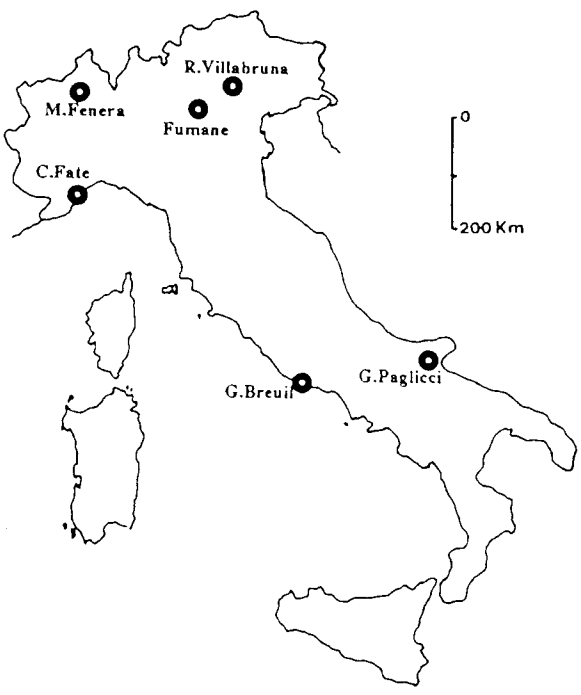

Fig. 1 Locations of Middle and Upper sites mentioned in the text.

Fig. 2 Rockshelter of Fumane (Valpolicella, Verona). Courtesy of A. Broglio.

duous dentition, at around ten years of age. Both mesial and distal interproximal facets are present and large. Wear of the occlusal surface is greatly advanced compared to modern children, with exposition of large dentine areas, mainly on the lingual side. This surface is too worn for its exact shape to be determined.

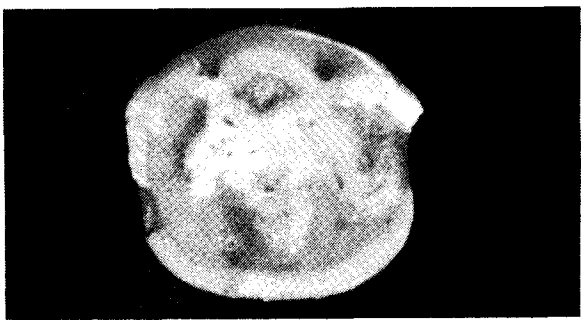

Fig. 3 Neandertal tooth (Fumane 1; second right lower decidual molar) from Layer A11 of the Fumane rockshelter. Occlusal view.

2. Monte Fenera

Several caves and shelters of Monte Fenera (Borgosesia, Vercelli) (fig. 1) contain Middle Palaeolithic deposits. Some of the caves were predominantly used as hibernation lairs by *Ursus spelaeus*, whose bones and teeth represent more than 90% of the faunal remains. Excavations were carried out from 1966 to 1977 in some of the deposits by F. Fedele (see, e.g., Fedele, 1974). In May, 1989, two human teeth were collected by P. Gallo and F. Strobino on the erosion surface of the Pleistocene deposit at the entrance of the cave "Ciota Ciara" (685 m above sea level). They are in the course of study by G. Villa and the Author of this article. Both teeth (one right lower second molar and one right upper first premolar), have been provisionally indicated, respectively as Fenera 1 and 2. They are large with robustness values outside marginal values of modern humans.

Fenera 1 (right lower M2) has a low and broad crown, showing a *cingulum* on its buccal aspect, and a deep *fovea anterior*, distally delimited by an enamel relief joining protoconid and metaconid. The occlusal surface has a complicated pattern and interproximal facets are large and display clear, thin subvertical channels, as often observed in Neandertal molars. The horizontal dimensions of the crown are as follows : MD = 11.9; BL = 10.5 (index of robustness = 124.95), with very large roots.

Fenera 2 (right upper P1) is very large even for a Neandertal tooth (dimensions : MD = 8.2 mm; BL = 10.7 mm). Its index of robustness (87.74) approaches the maximum of the Neandertal range. A *tuberculum molare* and a double ridge are on the lingual aspect of the buccal cusp.

3. Caverna delle Fate

Several Neandertal remains were discovered in the Mousterian deposit of the Caverna delle Fate (Finale Ligure, Savona) (fig. 1), at 280 m above sea level. Some (Le Fate I-III, fig. 4, 5 and 6) were identified during revision of the bone assemblage collected by G.B. Amerano in 1887-88 (for description, see Giacobini *et al.*, 1984). Non destructive gamma-ray spectrometry indicated an early-Würm age for these fossils (Giacobini *et al.*, 1984). Other remains (Le Fate IV-XVI) were discovered during excavations carried out from 1983 to 1988 by a joint French-Italian team (Institut de Paléontologie Humaine of Paris, Laboratoire du Lazaret of Nice, Museo Civico di Finale, Dipartimento di Anatomia e Fisiologia Umana of Turin, under the direction of the Soprintendenza Archeologica della Liguria). A preliminary description of some of

Fig. 4 Neandertal juvenile frontal bone (Le Fate I) from Caverna delle Fate (Finale Ligure, Savona).

these new fossils (Le Fate IV-VIII) has already been given (Giacobini and de Lumley, 1988). A complete list of the Le Fate remains is provided in Table 1 (see also Fabbri *et al.*, 1988).

Le Fate XIV-XVI are still unpublished. Their description will be done in collaboration between the Laboratoire de Préhistoire of the Musée de l'Homme of Paris (M.A. de Lumley) and the Dipartimento di Anatomia e Fisiologia Umana of the University of Turin (G. Giacobini and G. Villa).

Le Fate XIV is a deciduous molar (left upper dm1) with an index of robustness (62.78) which is not significantly different from that of the corresponding tooth of a modern child.

One of 3 roots (bucco-mesial) is broken and the surviving roots do not show signs of resorption. Wear is relatively advanced, with exposition of dentine on buccal and lingual cusps.

Le Fate XV is a lower incisor (right lower I2) (index of robustness = 42.7). Attrition penetrated the enamel on the occlusal edge, resulting in exposition of a large area of dentine. Several oblique and subparallel striations are present on labial enamel, as frequently observed on Neandertal anterior teeth. Such striations are generally interpreted as marks by stone implements (indication of coordinated action of the hands and teeth).

Le Fate XVI is a juvenile right zygomatic bone, lacking only part of the maxillary process, and belonging to the same individual as the frontal bone Le Fate I (child, 8-10 years old). Bone surfaces present on the frontal and zygomatic, and corresponding to the fronto-zygomatic suture, are complementary.

Fig. 5 Neandertal juvenile left half-mandible(Le fate II) from Caverna delle Fate (Finale Ligure, savona).

Fig. 6 Neandertal right half-mandible fragment (Le Fate III), adult individual) from Caverna delle Fate.

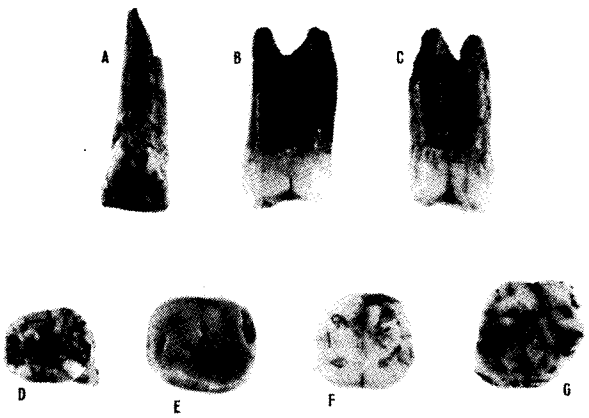

Fig. 7 Isolated Neandertal teeth (Caverna delle Fate).

4. Grotta Breuil

Grotta Breuil is one of several caves of Monte Circeo (Latina), 100 km south of Rome (fig. 1). Excavation of its Mousterian (Pontinian) deposit has been carried out under the direction of A. Bietti (University of Rome) since 1986 (Bietti *et al.*, 1988). Three human fossils were collected, one of which (Gbr. H1) is a fragment of left parietal (mastoid angle of the bone). Its outline in posterior view corresponds to the

Table 1. List of Neandertal remains from Caverna delle Fate (Finale Ligure, Savona, Northwest Italy) (i = intact; f = fragmentary; ff = very fragmentary).

LF I	child, 8-10 yrs : frontale (f).
LF II	child, 9-10 yrs : mandibula (f) with lt C, M1, M2 (P1 and P2 unerupted).
LF III	adult, mandibula (f) with rt M3.
LF IV	adult, occipitale (squama, ff).
LF V	child, 4-5 yrs, lt lower dm2 (i).
LF VI	adult, crown of rt lower M1.
LF VII	adult, rt upper P1 (i).
LF VIII	adult, lt upper P1 (i).
LF IX	adult, upper M (ff).
LF X	adult, phalanx manus, media (V?) (i).
LF XI	adult, lt upper I2 (f).
LF XII	adult, crown of lt lower M2.
LF XIII	adult, crown of rt upper M1.
LF XIV	child, 4-7 years, lt upper dm1
LF XV	adult, rt lower I2 (i).
LF XVI	child, 8-10 yrs, rt zygomaticum (f). Same individual as LF I (frontale).

globular shape of a Neandertal skull when viewed from behind. A preliminary description of this specimen was published by Bietti *et al.* (1988) and by Manzi and Passarello (1989; see also Manzi and Passarello, in press). Two other human fossils, which are in course of study by the same Authors, were found in the same deposit. They are represented by the crowns of two lower molars : (?) left M2 (Gbr. H2) and left M3 (Gbr. H3).

Upper Palaeolithic

1. Ripari Villabruna

The Villabruna rockshelters (A, B and C) (Sovramonte, Belluno) are located in the Cismon Valley, near the confluence of the Rosna stream in the Venetian Dolomites at 530 m above sea level (fig. 1). The shelters came to light in 1984, when the debris cone hiding them was removed by an excavator during roadworks. The late Epigravettian deposit of the rockshelters was excavated in 1988 under the direction of A. Broglio (University of Ferrara) (for a preliminary description of the site, see Broglio *et al.*, 1987-88b). In the lower part of the deposit of rockshelter A, a grave was discovered. The pit contained the skeleton of one male individual, approximately twenty five years old, which had been buried in supine, extended position. The skeleton was complete and in a remarkable state of preservation but for the lower limbs, which both had been truncated proximally to the knee by the excavator. The skeletal material is in the course of study by G. Alciati (University of Padova).

The individual had been buried with some rather ordinary stone and bone implements, probably representing the deceased's personal belongings rather than funeral offerings. These objects (one flint core and two blades, one sandstone retoucher, one bone point and one spheroid made out of resin) were concentrated close to the left forearm. The grave had been covered with some large pebbles, with a geometrical hyperanthropomorphous red ochre drawing on one of them.

2. Grotta Paglicci

The Upper Palaeolithic deposit of Grotta Paglicci (Rignano Garganic, Foggia, fig.1) represents one of the most important Italian Gravettian and Epigravettian sequences. In 1972, the grave of a 12-13 year old individual with rich grave goods had already been discovered in Gravettian layers dated at 24.100 ± 400 years B.P. (Mezzena and Palma di Cesnola, 1972; Mallegni F. and Parenti R., 1972-73; for description of other human remains from the same cave, see Corrain, 1965; Borgognini Tarli *et al.*, 1980). A second Gravettian grave (known since 1971) was excavated in June 1988, by a team directed by A. Palma di Cesnola (University of Siena) (for a preliminary description, see Palma di Cesnola, 1987-88 and the *Istituto di Preistoria e Protostoria* bulletin, 1989). The grave was comprised between Gravettian layers dated at 23.470 ± 380 and 23,040 ± 380 years B.P. The skeleton of a twenty-twenty-five year old female (now in course of study by F. Mallegni and P.F. Fabbi, University of Pisa) lay on its back in extended position with both hands resting on the pelvis. A few flint implements, possibly representing grave goods, were found in the pit; a "diadem" of pierced deer canines lay on the cranial vault, parallel to the coronal suture. The skeleton was coloured with red ochre, mainly concentrated on the head and pelvis. The grave had been covered with earth containing two distinct layers of animal bone debris, flint implements and stones.

Acknowledgments

The author is thankful to Michel Toussaint, organizer of the symposium "Cinq millions d'années, l'aventure humaine", for his invitation. The English text was kindly revised by Jera Pecotte. This research was supported by the Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologica and the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (fund 88.03672.15 and 89.05194 CT15).

References

BIETTI, A., MANZI, G., PASSARELLO, P., SEGRE, A.G. and STINER, M.C., 1988, The 1986 Excavation Campaign at Grotta Breuil (Monte Circeo, Latina), *Archeologia Laziale*, 9, pp. 372-388.

BORGOGNINI TARLI, S., FORNACIARI, G. et PALMA DI CESNOLA, A., 1980, Restes humains des niveaux gravettiens de la grotte Paglicci (Rignano Garganco) : contexte archéologique, étude anthropologique et notes de paléopathologie, *Bull. Mém. Soc. Anthrop. Paris*, 7, pp. 125-152.

BROGLIO, A., CREMASCHI, M. and SALZANI L., 1987-88a, Riparo di Fumane (Fumane, prov. di Verona), *Riv. Sci. Preist.*, 41, pp. 369-370.

BROGLIO, A., MONDINI, C. and VILLABURNA, A., 1987-88b, Ripari Villabruna (Sovramonte, prov. di Belluno), *Riv. Sci. Preist.*, 41, pp. 371-372.

CORRAIN, C., 1965, I resti scheletrici umani della Grotta Paglicci, Rignano Garganico, *Atti X Riun. Scient. I.I.P.P.*, p. 281-300.

FABBRI, P.F., GIACOBINI, G. and MALLEGNI, F., 1988, Homind Remains. An Up-date, Italy, Supplément au *Bull. Soc. Roy. Belge d'Anthrop. et de Préhistoire*, 60 p.

FEDELE, F., 1974, Monfenera 1973, Rapporto preliminare, *Bull. Et. Préhst. Alpines*, 6, pp. 53-83.

GIACOBINI, G., LUMLEY, M-A, YOKOYAMA, Y. and NGUYEN, H.-V., 1984, Neandertal Child and Adult Remains from a Mousterian Deposit in Nothern Italy (Caverna delle Fate, Finale Ligure), *J. Human Evol.*, 13, pp. 687-707.

GIACOBINI, G. et de LUMLEY, M-A., 1988, Les fossiles humains de la Caverna delle Fate (Finale, Ligurie Italienne) et la définition des caractères néandertaliens au début du Würm, in M. Otte (éd.), *L'Homme de Neandertal, 3, L'Anatomie*, pp. 53-65, ERAUL, Liège.

GIACOBINI, G. et MALLEGNI, F., 1989, Les Néandertaliens italiens. Inventaire des restes et nouvelles découvertes, in G. Giacobini (ed.), *Hominidae. Proceeding of the 2nd International Congress of Human Paleontology*, p. 379-385, Jaca Book, Milano.

ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI PREISTORIA E PROTOSTRIA, 1989, Grotta Paglicci (Rignano Garganico), in I.I.P.P. (ed.), *Attività del 1988*, pp. 21-24, Parenti, Firenze.

ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI PREISTORIA E PROTOSTRIA, 1990, Riparo di Fumane (Verona), in I.I.P.P. (ed.), *Attività del 1989*, pp. 20-24, Parenti, Firenze.

MALLEGNI, F., 1989, Les premiers habitants de la péninsule italienne, in G. Giacobini (ed.), *Hominidae. Proceeding of the 2nd International Congress of Human Paleontology*, pp. 275-281, Jaca Book, Milano.

MALLEGNI, F. and PARENTI, R., 1972-73, Studio antropologico di uno scheletro giovanile di età gravettiana trovato nella grotta Paglicci (Rignano Gaeganico), *Riv. Antropologia*, 58, pp. 317-348.

MANZI, G. and PASSARELLO, P., 1989, From Casal de'Pazzi to Grotta Breuil : Fossil Evidence from Latium (Central Italy) before the Appearance of Modern Humans, *Animal and Human Biology*, 1, p. 111-143.

MANZI, G. and PASSARELLO, P., in press, Anténéandertaliens et Néandertaliens du Latium (Italie Centrale), *L'Anthropologie*.

MEZZENA, F. and PALMA DI CESNOLA, A., 1972, Scoperta di una sepoltura gravettiana nella Grotta Paglicci (Rignano Garganico), *Riv. Sci. Preist.*, 27, pp. 27-50.

OAKLEY, K.P., CAMBELL, B.G. and MOLLESON, T.I., 1971, *Catalogue of Fossil Hominids. Part II : Europe*, London, British Museum (Natural History).

PALMA DI CESNOLA, A., 1987-88, Grotta Paglicci (Rignano Garganico, Prov. di Foggia), *Riv. Sci. Preist.*, 41, pp. 381-382 (Notiziario).