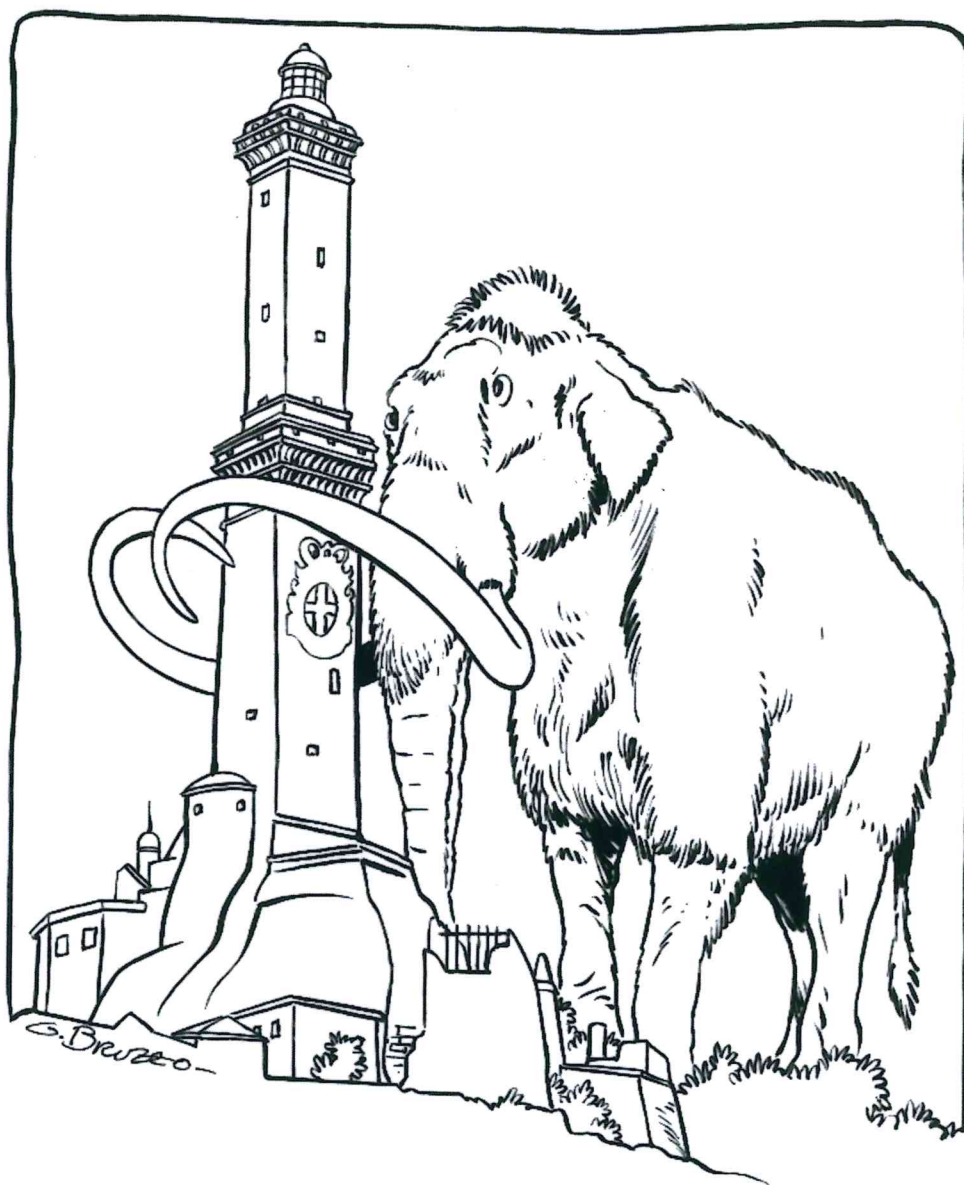




**First Annual Meeting of Prehistory and Protohistory
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**The Palaeolithic and Mesolithic in Italy: new research and perspectives.
Il Paleolitico e il Mesolitico in Italia: nuove ricerche e prospettive di studio.**



ABSTRACT BOOK



ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI PREISTORIA E PROTOSTORIA

DIPARTIMENTO DI ANTICHITA', FILOSOFIA, STORIA
Università degli Studi di Genova

AIQUA

Associazione Italiana per lo Studio del Quaternario

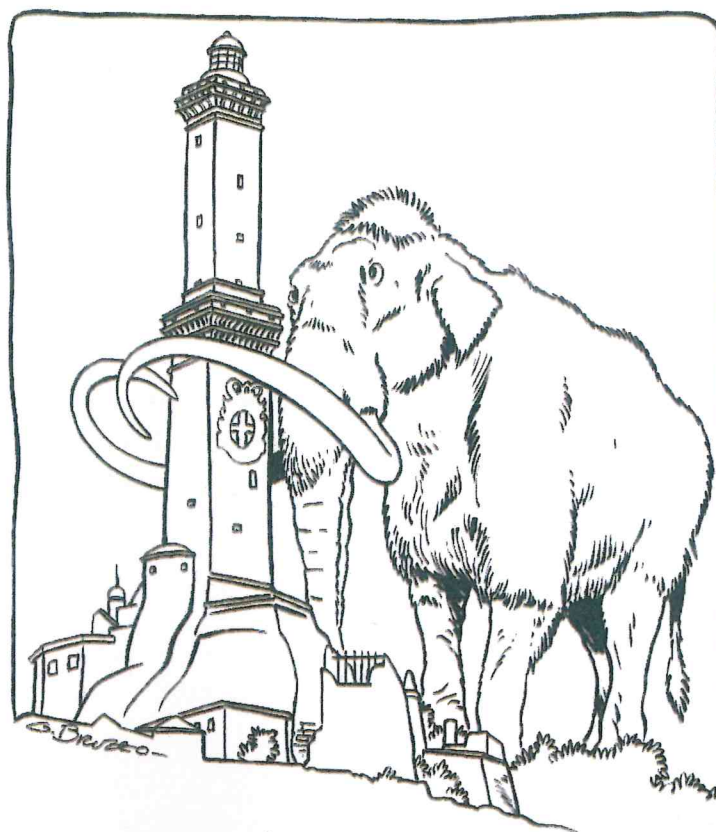
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ABSTRACT BOOK

Fabio Negrino, Federica Fontana, Adriana Moroni, Julien Riel Salvatore
(eds. / a cura di)



Fabio Negrino, Stefano Benazzi, Jamie Hodgkins, Brigitte Holt, Christopher Miller, Caley Orr, Marco Peresani, Julien Riel Salvatore, David Strait, Claudine Gravel-Miguel, Henry De Santis, Elisa Leger, Sergio Martini, Elisabetta Perroni, Antoine Laliberté, Geneviève Pothier Bouchard, Elisabetta Starnini, Andrea Zerboni.

On-going research and first data from Middle and Upper Palaeolithic sites of Liguria region.

Since 2014, several new field projects have focused their attention on the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic record of Liguria. After a ten-year hiatus, new excavations began in 2015 at Riparo Bombrini (Ventimiglia, Imperia) and, that same year, a field project focused on another site – Arma Veirana (Erli, Savona) – that had previously only been known from material recovered from the backdirt of clandestine excavations. Along with these field projects, several new projects seeking to provide better data on old unpublished or poorly-known collections were also initiated: these focus on material from sites including the Ex-Birreria and the Ex-Casinò localities at the Balzi Rossi (Ventimiglia, Imperia), Monte Albareo (Arma di Taggia, Imperia), Via San Francesco in Sanremo (Imperia), Musazzi (Ranzi, Pietra Ligure, Savona) and Arma delle Manie (Finale Ligure, Savona).

While these different projects are still at their beginnings, several noteworthy data have already emerged. Beginning with the oldest assemblage, a small, flat quartz biface has been identified in the lithic collection from Monte Albareo, located close to Grotta della Madonna dell'Arma, which was recovered during the excavation of a trench dug to install a pipeline (Lumley *et alii* 2008). It is the only artifact of that type currently known from Liguria and it resembles those from Level UA 25 from Grotte du Lazaret, which dates to ca. 160ky BP (Lumley 2004). The heavily laminar assemblage from Via San Francesco, in Sanremo, also potentially dates to an early phase of the Mousterian (Isetti 1961; Negrino, Tozzi 2008; Riel-Salvatore, Negrino 2009). U/Th-ESR data (Pirouelle 2006) indicate it may date to Marine Isotope Stage 6, which would contradict previous, typologically-based assessments supporting that it represented a distinctive facies of the Late Mousterian. New Results from an OSL dating programme at the site will soon permit to more definitely settle this debate.

As far as later phases of the Mousterian are concerned, several assemblages dating to between MIS 5 and 3 are currently being reanalyzed. Lithic assemblages from the base of the deposits from both the Ex-Birreria and the Ex-Casinò (unit A1-2) localities, above Tyrrhenian marine deposits, comprise tools made prevalently on local flint often produced using the centripetal Levallois method (Tozzi and Negrino 2008). Higher in the deposits of both sites, a clear techno-economic break is evident, as shown by the presence of larger Levallois flakes made on Sanremo quartzite. This marked techno-economic reorganization appears to be associated with a climatic downturn (MIS 4?), as suggested by the presence of abundant cryoclastic debris in the sediment. In contrast, the Late Mousterian is documented in the upper levels from Arma delle Manie (Arobba *et alii* 1976; Peresani 2003) and in unit IV at Riparo Bombrini (Holt *et alii* in preparation; Tozzi and Negrino 2008). This industry is characterized by the presence of both Levallois and Discoid production strategies. At Riparo Bombrini, the abundance of marine mollusk shells including limpets and other gastropods indicates a sustained exploitation of these animals as a dietary resource by Neanderthals. The assemblage from Musazzi remains undated but it almost certainly also dates to the Late Mousterian. It is characterized by a very high frequency of retouched implements, including several elongated convergent scrapers that are quite similar to awls.

The earliest Upper Paleolithic record of the region has also been the focus of intense research, especially at Riparo Bombrini (Bertola *et alii* 2013; Holt *et alii* in preparation). New Protoaurignacian deposits have been identified at the site during the new field project that began in 2015 and this new field research has already yielded interesting new data, including the presence in

this context of a small sidescraper made on yellow flint from the Scaglia Variegata Formation, which would be the first evidence of contacts between Liguria and the Veneto Pre-Alps during that period. As at Riparo Mochi, the transition between the Mousterian and Protoaurignacian at Riparo Bombrini is associated with a depositional hiatus, meaning that the exact nature of the first settlement of Liguria by *Homo sapiens* remains an open question. While the Protoaurignacian at Bombrini is directly associated with a modern human deciduous tooth (Benazzi *et alii* 2015), it appears at the Balzi Rossi as a fully developed cultural phenomenon embedded in an extremely large social geography that links the Rhône Valley to the Adriatic coast of the Italian peninsula. There is currently no evidence of either a “transition” or a migration to explain its origin, which means that even the scenario of a western origin remains to be tested (Douka *et alii* 2014).

Lastly, Late Upper Paleolithic (Epigravettian) deposits have recently been identified during new excavations at Arma Veirana where, in spite of the presence of substantial Mousterian deposits in the deeper levels, there is currently no evidence of a Protoaurignacian or Aurignacian presence.

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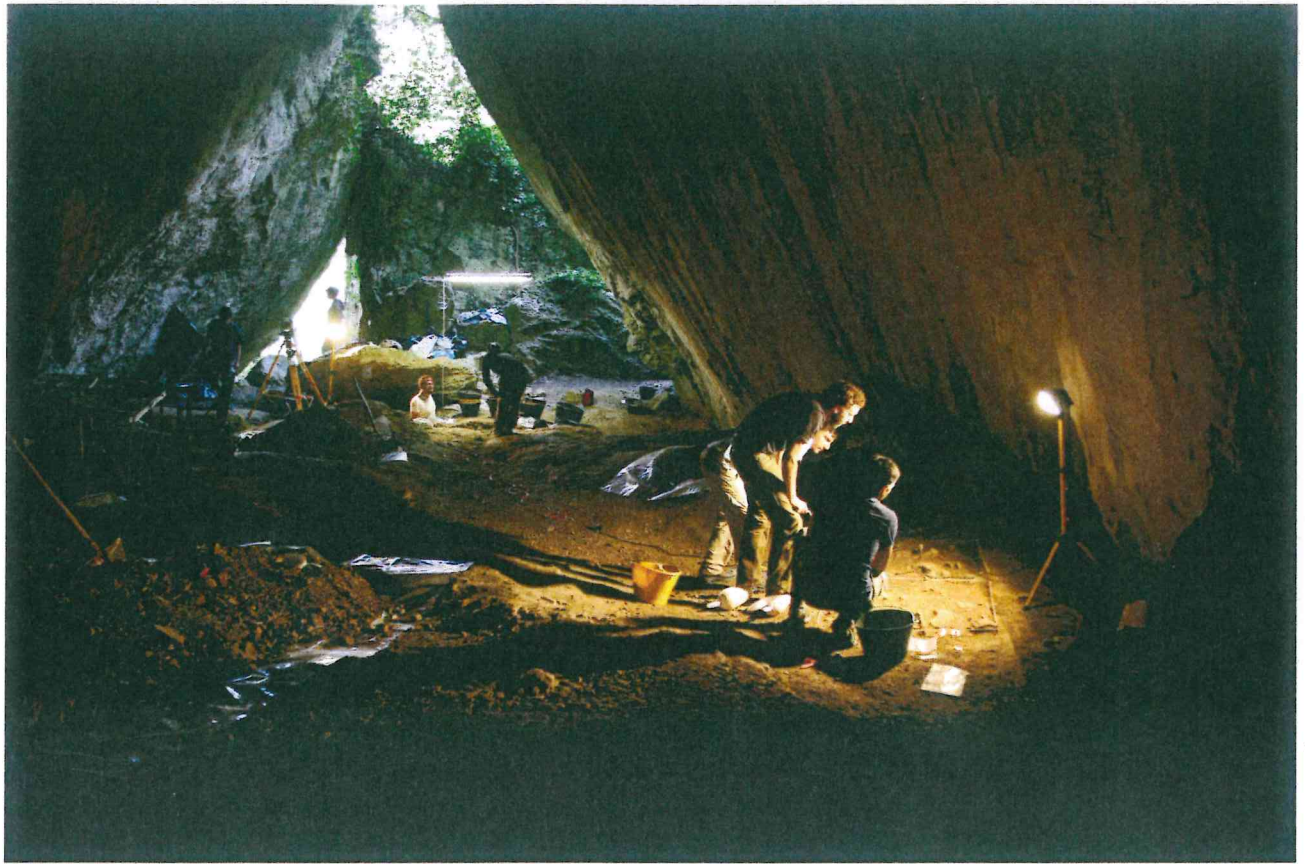


Fig. 1 – 2015 excavation at Arma Veirana (Erli, Savona).