



Catalogue of Italian Fossil Human Remains from the Palaeolithic to the Mesolithic

The *Catalogue of Italian Fossil Human Remains from Palaeolithic to the Mesolithic* was developed within the framework of *Targeted Project - Cultural Heritage* of the *Italian National Research Council*. Information of the most diverse nature (anthropological, geo-chronological, paleo-environmental) about sites and human remains is gathered together, creating a source of knowledge that becomes essential for the valorisation and conservation of such “Cultural Assets”. Seventy-eight sites studied from 1860 to the present day are considered (see map on the right), including 258 human remains covering a period of more than 800.000 years. This considerable information should make the Catalogue a useful tool to help understand how ancient human beings distributed in the territory and geo-climatic changes influenced peopling processes.



The fossil calvarium found at Campogrande near **Ceprano** (Southern Latium, Italy) in 1994 has been geo-stratigraphically dated to about 800-900 ka. As far as we know at present, it is the most ancient human specimen discovered in Europe. Owing to the combination of archaic and derived features, the Ceprano fossil calvarium may be considered a good representative of both the earliest inhabitants of Europe and the last common ancestor between the following Europeans, known as Neanderthals, and our own species that evolved afterwards in Africa, *Homo sapiens*.

The **Altamura** skull was found inside the "Lamalunga Cave" by the speleo club C.A.R.S. (Centro Altamurano Ricerche Speleologiche) in the autumn of 1993. The human remains were found in the corner of a small cavity, where they appear to be partly incorporated with calcareous concretions. In many aspects the morphology of the skull (e.g. the maxillary and the occipital), quite clearly resembles those of the Neanderthal lineage. Some features of the vault and of the base seem to be less advanced, but any firm conclusions can only be drawn after the removal of calcareous concretions.



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