

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES FROM THE LOWER PALAEOLITHIC PALAEOANTHROPOLOGICAL SITE OF VISOGLIANO (NE ITALY)

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The Visogliano shelter has been defined as an important Middle Pleistocene site where human remains were found together with an archaic lithic industry. Besides the human remains, stone tools, sediments, pollen and faunal remains have been already the subject of specific analyses indicating that the fossil bearing layers were deposited in one interglacial and one or two glacial phases (dated to a 500-350 kyr time span). However, among the non-human vertebrates, only mammals were studied so far. Here we report, for the first time, on the amphibians and reptiles collected thanks to the wet sieving screening of the sediments from the shelter. The analysis is preliminary since only the remains recovered between 1992 and 2000 have been studied so far, but overall 1305 fossils were identified.

The herpetofauna consists of at least four amphibians (an undetermined caudate, *Bufotes viridis*, *Pelophylax* sp., *Rana* sp.) and at least seven reptiles (*Testudo hermanni*, *Anguis* gr. *A. fragilis*, a large- and a small-sized lacertids, undetermined "Colubrines", *Natrix* sp., *Vipera* gr. *V. aspis*). Interestingly, all the taxa recognised so far are still represented in NE Italy, supporting the previously reported hypothesis of a modern herpetofauna that was already setting up in the area since the beginning of the Pleistocene. Notable is the apparent absence of *Pseudopus*, which is known in other Middle (and even Late) Pleistocene sites of this part of the country (e.g., in Veneto).