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# The human remains from Ciota Ciara Cave (Piedmont, Italy)

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## Résumé

The Ciota Ciara cave (Piedmont, Italy) represents the oldest evidence of human presence in Piedmont. This site, excavated for more than 10 years by the University of Ferrara, has contributed to the understanding of the subsistence behaviors of prehistoric populations in this region. Recently, radiometric dating has allowed to precise the chronological range of the human occupations of this site around 300,000 years BP. This period located at the beginning of the Middle Paleolithic is a key moment in the evolutionary history of Europe showing a great morphological variability within hominins (possibly grouped under the taxon *Homo heidelbergensis*) at the time of the emergence of Neandertals. Fortunately, during the last excavation campaign in the Ciota Ciara cave, a total of four human remains were discovered: three permanent teeth (a lower incisor, an upper canine, and an upper molar) and a nearly complete fragment of occipital bone. We present here, for the first time, the preliminary results of the morphometric analysis of these human remains and comparison with a reference collection composed of European Middle and Upper Pleistocene specimens. The morphological comparison was mainly based on the evaluation of their "Neandertalisation process" to contribute to the discussion about the tempo and mode of the development of the Neandertal lineage in Europe during the late Middle Pleistocene.

**Mots-Clés:** Middle Pleistocene, Neanderthals, Middle Paleolithic, teeth, occipital bone

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