
Palaeoecological analysis of sediments documenting the Middle-Upper Palaeolithic age transition in Alpine and Mediterranean ecosystems; palaeoenvironmental and quantitative palaeoclimate reconstructions. A contribution to the ERC Project "SUCCESS".

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Résumé

Within the recently-obtained ERC Consolidator Grant 2016 "*SUCCESS - The earliest migration of Homo sapiens in southern Europe: understanding the biocultural processes that define our uniqueness*", a Work Package dedicated to palaeoenvironmental analysis and quantitative climate reconstructions has been activated. The WP will focus on new palaeoecological analysis and revision of available data from stratigraphic archives located in Alpine, central-southern Italian and Mediterranean ecosystems. Studies will concentrate on the time span between Heinrich Event 5 to 3, known for their strong impact in Mediterranean Europe, the Balkans and Italy (Follieri et al., 1988; Allen et al., 2000; Lezine et al., 2010; Müller et al., 2011, Pini et al., 2010; Panagiotopoulos et al., 2014). Prior to any new analysis, the state-of-the-art of palaeoecological researches relevant to the SUCCESS Project will be depicted.

At the UISPP Congress we will present the frame from which the "Palaeoecology Working Package" is taking its first steps. Researches on lake successions documenting the Middle to Upper Palaeolithic transition will be presented and compared. Data on reconstructed vegetation and landscapes from different geographic and climatic areas will be discussed

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to explore the effects of short-term (Dansgaard - Oeschger cycles, Heinrich events) climate variability on ecosystem and human cultural frameworks. Palaeoecological information will help envisaging the landscape structure and the natural resources at the time of Palaeolithic occupation and immigration of anatomically-modern humans into Europe.

Attention will be paid to the reference record of Lake Fimon (Venetian Alpine foothills, north-eastern Italy). This area is indeed well known as it provides both a Late Pleistocene palaeoecological record and several Middle to Late Palaeolithic sites yielding evidence of Neandertal and Anatomically-Modern Humans occupation. A high-resolution palynostratigraphic research will be developed on the Lake Fimon core to answer specific questions relevant to the ERC Project, i.e. the effects of climate variability on the environments of last Neandertals - early AMH, the role of fire, etc. Environmental proxies from Lake Fimon will be matched with archaeological information from cave deposits in the same region which testify to the ancient legacy of human occupation in the area and the complex interaction between natural resources and human groups.

Mots-Clés: ERC SUCCESS, Middle Upper Paleolithic, Palaeoecology