



General Palaeontology, Systematics and Evolution (Vertebrate Palaeontology)

Late Pleistocene skeleton of *Canis lupus* l., 1758 from Grotta Mora Cavorso (Jenne, Latium, central Italy)



Squelette de Canis lupus retrouvé dans le Niveau 7 de la Grotta Mora Cavorso (Latium, Italie centrale) datant du Pléistocène supérieur

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the skeleton of *Canis lupus* found in Layer 7 of Grotta Mora Cavorso (Latium, central Italy), correlated with the MIS 3. Research on the deposition dynamics of this find is still in progress, but the action of human or other predators can be excluded. This specimen consists of a near complete articulated skeleton, lacking only the calvarium. The age at death was estimated at around six years old. Preliminary morphometric analyses and comparisons with samples of Italian Late Pleistocene wolf and extant Apennine wolf (*C. lupus italicus*) remains, show that the dimensions of the teeth and long bones are among the biggest known from the Italian Late Pleistocene and larger than the extant Apennine wolf.

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R É S U M É

Cette étude porte sur un squelette de *Canis lupus* retrouvé dans le Niveau 7 de la Grotta Mora Cavorso (Latium, Italie centrale), corrélé avec le MIS 3. Les dynamiques de dépôt sont actuellement en cours d'étude, bien qu'on puisse exclure l'action de l'homme ou d'autres prédateurs. Ce spécimen, auquel il manque la calotte crânienne, était en connexion anatomique. L'âge au décès est de six ans environ. Des analyses morphométriques préliminaires et des comparaisons effectuées avec d'autres loups du Pléistocène supérieur italien, ainsi que sur un échantillon de loup actuel des Apennins (*C. lupus italicus*), ont montré que les dimensions des dents et des os longs sont parmi les plus grandes dans le Pléistocène supérieur italien et plus grandes que chez le loup actuel des Apennins.

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1. Introduction

This paper describes the Late Pleistocene skeleton of a wolf from Grotta Mora Cavorso (Jenne, Simbruini Mountains, central Italy), anatomically articulated but lacking its calvarium.

Grotta Mora Cavorso (Fig. 1A) is located in the territory of Jenne (Latium, central Italy), at 715 m a.s.l., along the upper Aniene River Valley. This site is mostly known for

holding the largest human burial deposit of Early Neolithic central Italy (Rolfo et al., 2012 with references).

Extant wolf, *Canis lupus*, probably originates in the early Middle Pleistocene of Beringia (Tedford et al., 2009) and it reaches western Europe during the second half of middle Pleistocene (Boudadi-Maligne, 2012; Bertè and Pandolfi, 2014). *C. lupus* first occurs in Italy in the late Middle Pleistocene of Polledrara di Cecanibbio (Rome), correlated with the Marine Isotope Stage 9 (MIS 9) (Palombo et al., 2003).

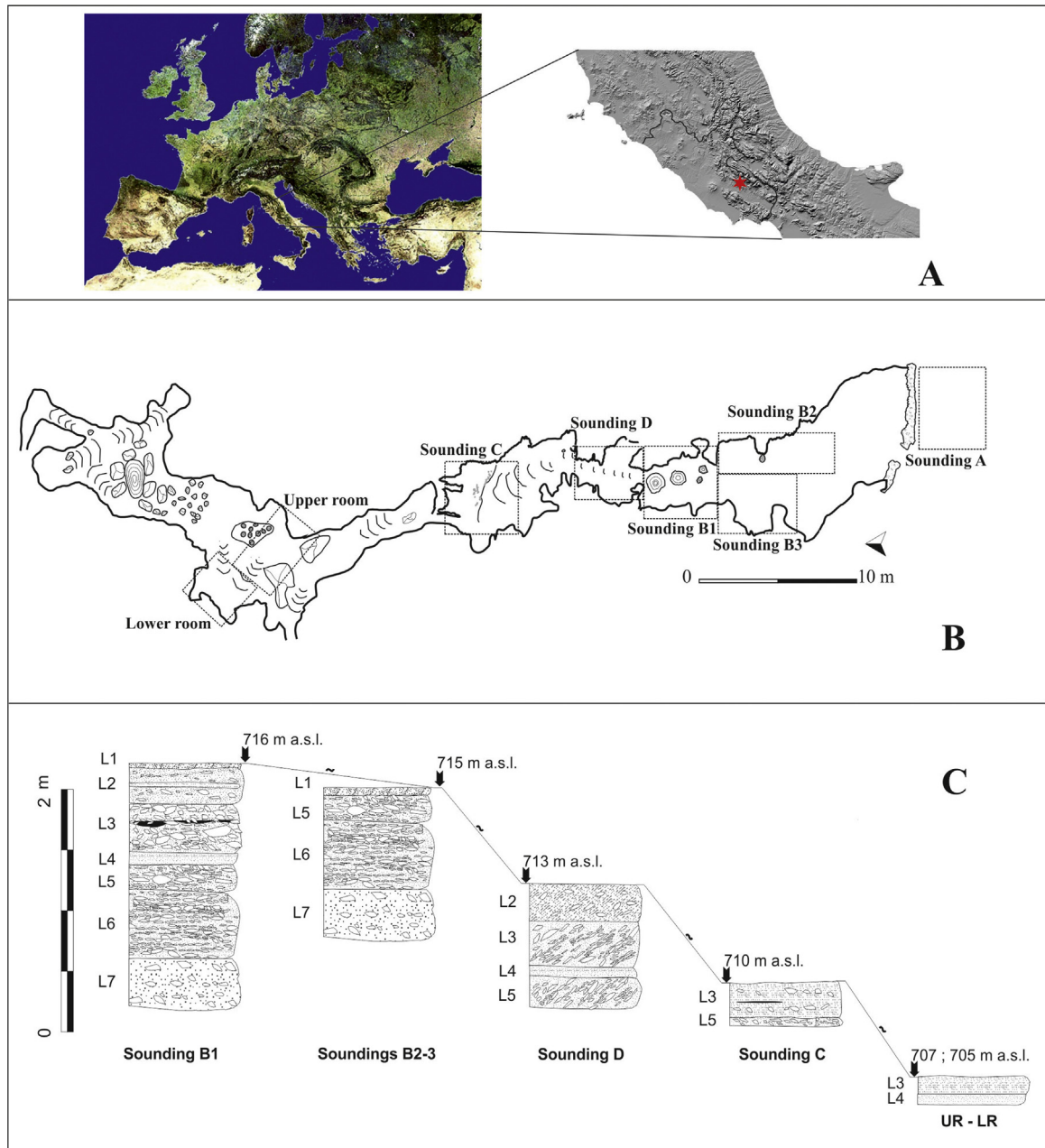


Fig. 1. Grotta Mora Cavorso: A) location of the site; B) plan of the cave with location of the soundings; C) stratigraphic sequences of archaeological soundings and their height above sea level.

Fig. 1. Grotta Mora Cavorso : A) localisation du site ; B) planimétrie de la grotte avec la localisation des fouilles ; C) séquences stratigraphiques des fouilles archéologiques et de leur altitude au-dessus du niveau de la mer.

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