Excavation campaigns at La Sassa cave took place in 2015 and 2016. A third campaign is planned for the summer of 2017. A Copper Age burial place has been found in Room 2. A large amount of human bones (NMI, 81) were scattered into the branch together with some Canis lupus bones and few potsherds. The human bones were not in anatomical connection. A femur was radiocarbon dated to 4000±35 BP (2619-2462 calBC). Other human bones were found in Room 1 (Saggio Lella), below a Middle Bronze Age layer. Protoapenninic potsherds (MBA 1-2) were collected in Rooms 1-4. They likely refers to cultual habits, as already observed in other near caves (Alessandri, Rolfo 2016). Late pleistocene fauna was found in Rooms 1, 3 and 6. An almost complete bear skeleton (Ursus arctos) has been recovered in Room 6. A humerus have been radiocarbon dated to 30210±180 BP (32547-32022 calBC).

The project
The Caprolace and La Sassa excavations are taking place in the framework of the Groningen Avellino Project and in collaboration with Tor Vergata University. The aim is to investigate the Copper Age and the Early/Middle Bronze Age in the Pontine Plain, before and after the so-called Avellino eruption. An ongoing set of DNA and isotope analyses (Sr, N, C, C14) on the human bones will investigate their origins, provenience, diet and chronology. Those analysis will be carried out in collaboration with the University of Oxford (DNA, Department of Zoology) and with the INGV (Sr, Istituto Nazionale Geofisica e Vulcanologia) of Naples.

Bibliography

Collaborations
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