AIQUA CONGRESS 2012:

"THE TRANSITION FROM NATURAL TO ANTHROPOGENIC-DOMINATED ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE IN ITALY AND THE SURROUNDING REGIONS SINCE THE NEOLITHIC"

Organised by

Associazione Italiana per lo Studio del Quaternario
Dipartimento di Scienze della Terra di Pisa
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Program and Abstracts

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CHARCOAL DATA FROM ORIENTE CAVE (FAVIGNANA ISLAND, SICILY)

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This study presents the preliminary archeobotany data from the site of Grotta d’Oriente, on Favignana island (Sicily), excavated by University of Florence in 2005. The deposit presents evidences of short-term human occupation, in a period that spanning Upper Palaeolithic to the transition from Mesolithic to Neolithic. The samples analyzed are dated \~9750 cal BP and \~14.200 ka cal BP. The charcoal data were analyzed under a microscope in order to determine the taxa of the natural vegetal resources used for combustion. The preliminary data allow us to hypothesize an environmental reconstruction of the surrounding area around the site during the human occupation and these data may suggest information about the paleoclimate of the area. About the beginning of the Holocene, the analyses show an environment of Mediterranean shrubland, with the presence of \textit{Pistacia lentiscus}, \textit{Rhamnus/Phyllirea}, \textit{Arbutus unedo}, \textit{Myrtus communis}, \textit{Rhus}, \textit{Chamaerops humilis}. During Bølling-Allerød (\~14,2 ka cal BP), the data concerning the oldest human occupation of the site show the presence of \textit{Acer}, \textit{Juniperus}, \textit{Pistacia lentiscus}, taxa who suggest an environment made up not only by Mediterranean shrubland.