

## Madonna Bianca Rockshelter (Trento)

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**ABSTRACT** - The excavation carried out at the Madonna Bianca rockshelter brought to light a stratigraphic sequence documenting the occupation of the shelter during the Mesolithic, Early Neolithic and the Copper Age.

**KEY WORDS:** Rockshelter, Trento, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Copper Age

**PAROLE CHIAVE:** Riparo, Trento, Mesolitico, Neolitico, Età del Rame

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A group of youngsters living in the tower blocks 4 and 5 of the Madonna Bianca Estate in the hilly area between the ex Villa Taxis and the valley bottom on the left side of the River Adige discovered an assemblage of lithic industry while playing in the rocky ravines in September 1985. The material, typologically ascribed to the Mesolithic and the Eneolithic, was later handed over to the Museo Tridentino di Scienze Naturali by Mr. Nino Gasperi and his son.

The Ufficio di Tutela Archeologica, the Museo Tridentino di Scienze Naturali immediately agreed to promote a series of surveys in the area of the findings, directed by Bagolini with the help of B. Angelini and T. Pasquali. The following year a test excavation was carried out beneath a rocky overhang. M. Avanzini, G. Mezzena, I. Mosna, V. Rosà and some of the youngsters who discovered the site also took part in the research.

The excavation carried out in quite a small area, near a small shelter made of a large sharp rock overhang, brought to light material ascribed to the Iron Age, the Late Bronze Age, the Eneolithic, Early Neolithic, Late Mesolithic, and Early Mesolithic. Of particular interest was the finding, along the scarp, near the shelter, of a few fragments of a skull and a partly coated grey flint dag-

ger, defined by De Marinis as a laurel leaf type with a butt base (DE MARINIS & PEDROTTI, 1997, fig.5:1d) and ascribed by him as belonging to the Copper Age. Similar specimens had already been found in the Region, such as those belonging to the burial goods of the graves found in the La Cosina Grotta near Stravino (TN) (ROBERTI, 1913, fig.4; MOTTES, 1996) and the isolated one found at Latsch-Goldrein (DAL RÌ & TECCHIATI, 1995, Abb.17).

The excavation carried out in 1986 brought to light a stratigraphic sequence, that had been badly damaged during the construction of a small shed, documenting the occupation of the shelter during the Mesolithic, Early Neolithic and the Copper Age. A niche inside the shelter is attributed to the Copper Age along with a grave, documented by some teeth, bones and fragments of a skull. A Remedelian-type large coated flint arrowhead with a broken tang (Fig. 2) was also found in the same area along with a thin bone stick-shaped pendant, also known as a Montgomery type button (Fig. 1). This last element is traditionally interpreted as belonging to the Bell-shaped Culture (NICOLIS & PEDROTTI, 1997:407). In Trentino this sort of object is also documented in the female burial goods at Vela Valbusa, attributed to an early phase of the Bronze Age (FASANI, 1991) and at Romagnano III Loc

(PERINI, 1971, fig.32,11 and 49). Other such objects have been found at Ledro, Colòmbio at Mori and Nogarole at Mezzocorona (MOTTES & NICOLIS, pp.74-76).

Unfortunately, it is impossible to consider the thin stick-shaped pendant, the Remedellian arrow-head and the flint dagger as belonging to the burial goods of just one burial due to the methods of discovery and to the fact that such spaces delimited by rocks were frequently used as funerary chambers for collective burials during the Copper Age (BARFIELD, BUTEUX & BOCCHIO, 1995:36-39). It is also difficult to place the numerous potsherds decorated with smooth cordons in context; on the basis of their typology, they could possibly be ascribed either to the Copper Age (Isera V horizon) or to the Bronze Age.

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Fig. 1 - Montgomery-type button

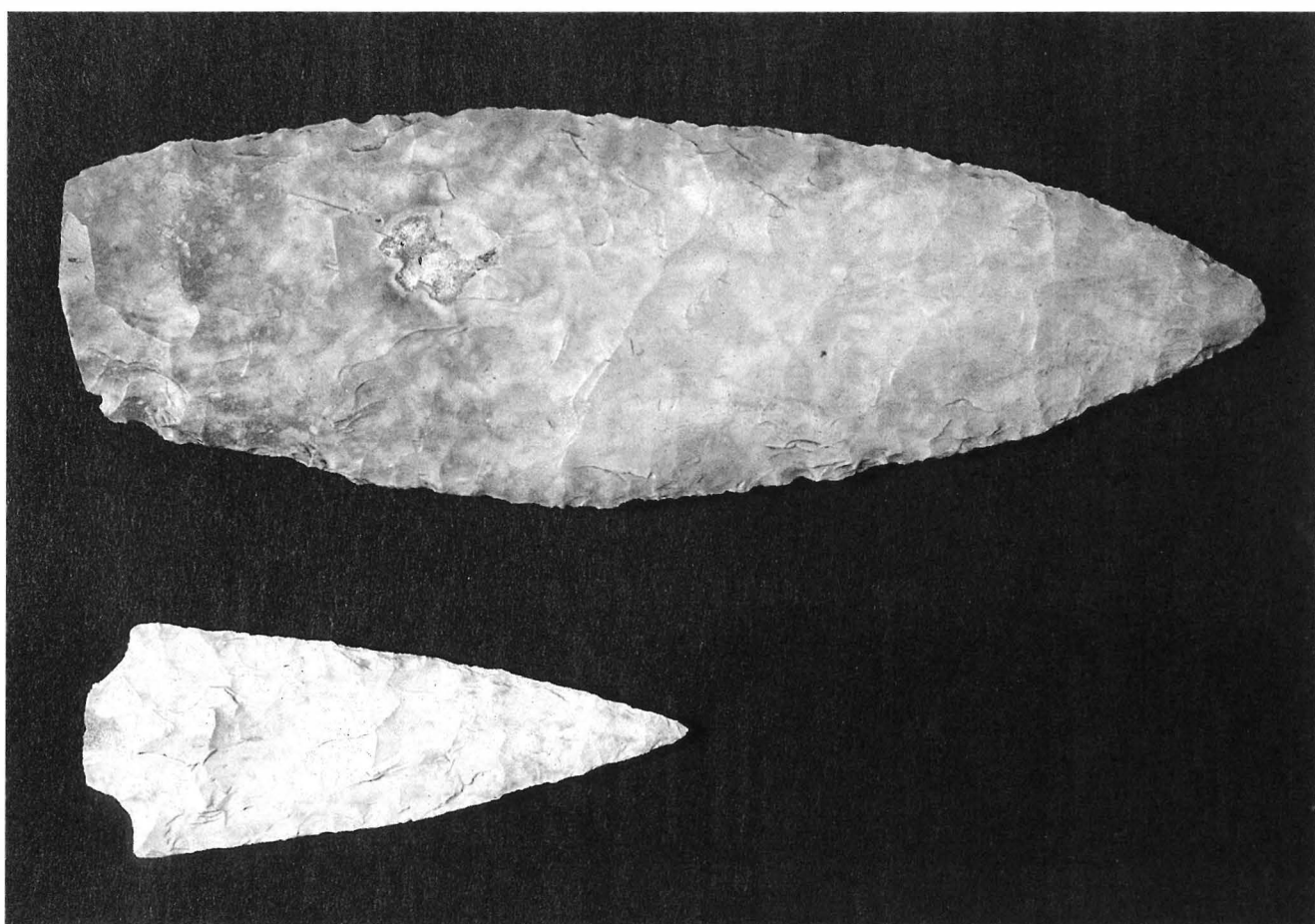


Fig. 2 - Remedello-type knife and arrowhead