



6

WORKSHOPS - TOME II

- LITHIC TECHNOLOGY: FROM RAW MATERIAL
PROCUREMENT TO TOOL PRODUCTION
- CA' BELVEDERE DI MONTE POGGIOLO: THE FIRST
INHABITANTS IN EMILIA-ROMAGNA
- BEFORE FOOD PRODUCTION IN NORTH AFRICA:
GENERAL QUESTIONS AND ANALYTICAL TOOLS
DEALING WITH RESOURCE EXPLOITATION AND
POPULATION DYNAMICS AT 12,000-7000 BP
- FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF LITHIC ARTEFACTS:
CURRENT STATE OF THE RESEARCH
- RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CAUCASUS, ANATOLIA AND
S.E. EUROPE IN THE COPPER AND BRONZE AGE
- THE TEACHING OF PREHISTORY IN SCHOOLS AND
UNIVERSITIES
- FIRST SUGGESTIONS FROM ALTAMURA CAVE
- THE ARCHEO-PALAEONTOLOGICAL SITES OF THE
SIERRA DE ATAPUERCA (SPAIN)
- INITIATIVES FOR A MODERN MUSEOGRAPHY

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VOLUME 6 - Tome II

- Workshop 12 -** Lithic technology: from raw material procurement to tool production
Workshop 13 - Ca' Belvedere di Monte Poggiolo: the first inhabitants in Emilia-Romagna
Workshop 14/15/16 - Before Food Production in North Africa: general questions and analytical tools dealing with resource exploitation and population dynamics at 12,000-7000 BP
Workshop 17 - Functional analysis of lithic artefacts: current state of the research
Workshop 18 - Relations between the Caucasus, Anatolia and S.E. Europe in the Copper and Bronze Age
Workshop 19 - The teaching of Prehistory in schools and Universities
Workshop 20 - First suggestions from Altamura cave
Workshop 21 - The archeo-palaeontological sites of the Sierra de Atapuerca (Spain)
Workshop 22 - Initiatives for a modern museography

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WORKSHOP 13

**Ca' Belvedere di Monte Poggiolo:
i primi abitanti in Emilia-Romagna
Ca' Belvedere di Monte Poggiolo:
les premiers habitants en Emilia-Romagna
Ca' Belvedere di Monte Poggiolo:
the first inhabitants in Emilia-Romagna**

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LOWER PALAEOOLITHIC INDUSTRIES OF THE CASTELBOLOGNESE AREA

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Since 1987 onwards numerous Lower Palaeolithic artifacts have been found in the foothills around Bergullo and Serra to the west of Castelbolognese. The area is characterised by the general features of the Apennine foothill morphology, with a terraced surface, gently sloping towards the plain, generally furrowed by valleys oriented towards the north-east. This particular area is incised by the Rio Sanguinario which, having drained the low hills at the foot of Monte Scastello (254 m) with a fan of three valleys and having collected their waters into a single river, descends towards the plain from about 70 metres above sea-level. The lithic artifacts, some of which were found in the basin downhill of the confluence, were also found in cultivated fields at between 150 and 50 metres above sea-level, on the shores of the Rio Sanguinario and along the watersheds on both sides.

The incision of the water course revealed a series of Quaternary deposits (Selli 1969; Cremonini & Elmi 1971; Ricci Lucchi *et al.* 1982) constituted from the bottom upwards by: Lower Pleistocene *Argille Azzurre*; 2) Lower Pleistocene grey pelitic and sandy sediments with gravels; 3) Middle Pleistocene yellowish brown arenaceous deposits with lenses and levels of gravel; 4) an Upper Pleistocene terraced surface covered by aeolian deposits, of which the pedogenesis developed at the beginning of the Upper Pleistocene. Finally there are also Upper Pleistocene-Holocene terraced and valley bottom alluviums.

The *Argille Azzurre* are marine deposits which are locally represented by marly-silty clays frequently laminated with thin sandy intercalations. This is the upper Pleistocene part of an essentially clayey unit which characterises the marine neoautochthonous of the sub-Apennine Plio-Pleistocene (Vai 1986).

The sediments above, defined Middle Pleistocene (Milazzian) *Sabbie Gialle e Conglomerati* in sheet 99 (Faenza) of the Carta Geologica d'Italia (1:100,000), appertain to a mainly sandy series which for some time has been known with the generic name of *Sabbie Gialle* (Brocchi 1814). It is, however, a notably diachronic (Castellarin *et al.* 1986) and multicyclical sequence (Vai 1984, 1995).

As stated above, two sectors are distinguishable in the local series which is globally attributed to the *Sabbie Gialle*. The basal one, which is constituted by grey pelitic and sandy sediments with gravel, is a heterogeneous and greyish lenticular deposit of clayey silty sand and very sandy silty clay in which there are lenses of coarse gravel with some elements as large as 20-30 centimetres. This deposit, which probably had a deltaic origin, is attributable to the end of the Lower Pleistocene since it contains a pebble industry analogous to that of the

same age found at Ca' Belvedere di Monte Poggiolo in the Forlì area (Antoniazzi *et al.* 1984, 1988, 1993; Peretto 1989a, 1989b, 1992a, 1992b, 1996; Posenato 1987; Antoniazzi & Piani 1992; Bisi *et al.* 1992, 1994; Gagnepain *et al.* 1992; Yokoyama *et al.* 1992; Amore *et al.* 1996; Gagnepain 1996).

In the upper part of the series of the local *Sabbie Gialle* there is a transition to Middle Pleistocene weakly cemented yellowish brown sandstones: a deposit of fluvial-deltaic origin, often stratified in an irregular and unclear way, and frequently with marked lenticular structures. Normally these are thin lenses of mainly small gravel. In some sporadic cases there are also banks of coarse gravel. In one of these, which is about two metres thick, artifacts have been found which appertain to an industry characterised by large flakes with Clactonian and Protolevallois characteristics and a few rare handaxes.

The geological sequence terminates in the upper part with a terraced surface which slopes towards the plain with an average slope which is barely perceptible. On this surface there is a loess deposit (Cremaschi 1983a, 1983b, 1987; Cremaschi & Peretto 1978, 1988; Antoniazzi *et al.* 1986), in other words of silt of aeolian origin, which is attributable to the penultimate glacial phase of which the pedogenetic evolution, which started at the beginning of the Upper Pleistocene, gave origin to a leached pseudogley palaeosoil (*Aqui Haploxeralfs* according to the United States classification) which is still quite widespread on the terraced surfaces of the foothills which rise above the current plain. In this sediment an abundant Levallois industry with rare handaxes was found. The tooth of a rhinoceros, which was found in the fluviolacustrine deposit of the river Conca associated with an analogous in situ industry, revealed an age of about 200,000 BP using non-destructive gamma spectrometry (Yokoyama *et al.* 1992).

The more recent sedimentary and tectonic events have also resulted in changes in the current morphology of the area, creating thin bands of terraced alluvium at the edges of the water courses.

The lithic industries from this area date to various chronological phases of the Lower Palaeolithic. The assemblages collected in the different areas are also not always homogeneous. This is particularly clear along the slopes where the finds from the most ancient deposits outcrop, and they are sometimes mixed with more recent artifacts of different topological contexts which have been colluviated from above. These elements are normally easy to recognise and are present in smaller quantities.

A careful analysis of the material discovered in the light of current knowledge about the Palaeolithic in Emilia Romagna and of the Po plain area in general, led to the recognition of at least four different cultural phases of the Lower Palaeolithic in this area: 1) pebble industries; 2) industries with abundant flake tools with slight Clactonian characteristics; 3) industries characterised by large flakes with Clactonian and Protolevallois characteristics; 4) Levallois technique industries with handaxes.

PEBBLE INDUSTRIES (Fig. 1)

The artifacts, which were found in the Lower Pleistocene grey pelitic and sandy sediments with gravel, are essentially represented by numerous pebbles with a few flake scars and by flakes which are nearly always cortical. The artifacts have no traces of postdepositional transport and normally have fresh edges, although sometimes there are traces of pseudo retouch and light surface patinas with ferrous striae caused by ploughs. All the artifacts are made from siliceous pebbles, the dimensions of which conditioned the different sizes of the flakes without however causing substantial techno-typological differences in the assemblages.

There is an abundance of flakes and a nearly total absence of tools in the classic sense of the term. The latter include types which are not very characteristic, and are generally identifiable as denticulates with semi-abrupt retouch.

Pebble artifacts are common. On the basis of the observations made at the site of Monte Poggiolo, these should be considered as cores. Therefore the presence of artifacts with unipolar or bipolar flake scars is entirely fortuitous and not connected with any intention to obtain specific morphologies connected with specific tools.

These pebble industries are similar to those from Ca' Belvedere di Monte Poggiolo and Podere Canestri (Aldini 1985; Antoniazzi *et al.* 1984, 1988, 1993; Bisi *et al.* 1988, 1992, 1994; Peretto 1989a, 1989b) as well as those from Ca' Paradiso del Covignano at Rimini (Sabatini 1985) and Ca' Romanina and Ca' Poggio near Bologna (Lenzi *et al.* 1985; Nenzioni 1996). Some of the differences which are observable in these assemblages, which are characterised by an extreme typological simplicity, are probably partly due to the different dimensions of the pebbles in the various localities, and partly due to chronological factors which have yet to be identified.

INDUSTRIES RICH WITH FLAKE ARTIFACTS WITH SLIGHT CLACTONIAN CHARACTERISTICS (Fig. 2)

The artifacts are made of flint and have fresh edges and light patinas. The assemblage is characterised by the presence of flakes which are normally cortical and some of which are of considerable size. The flint pebbles have few flake scars. There are also well defined tool types with simple or semi-abrupt retouch, and in particular sidescrapers and denticulates which are often carinated, some of which are made on pebble segments.

Although the industry is composed of only a few artifacts, it is well characterised and is different to any other assemblage found in the area. Although there is no doubt that it dates to the Lower Palaeolithic, in general it is not similar to the other industries found in Emilia-Romagna. On the other hand this industry is similar to those from level I at Monte Conero in the Marche (Peretto & Scarpante 1982) and level 6 at Quinzano in Veneto (Leonardi 1942; Peretto 1980, 1984). In these deposits the artifacts were found in the "Terra Rossa" which is attributed to a soil which formed during the Middle Pleistocene.

INDUSTRIES CHARACTERISED BY LARGE FLAKES WITH "CLACTONIAN AND PROTOLEVALLOIS" CHARACTERISTICS

The artifacts were found in the Middle Pleistocene yellowish brown arenaceous deposits with gravel lenses and levels which outcrop on the slope descending from the top terrace down towards the Rio Sanguinario. It is quite a small assemblage but well characterised from the point of view of the techno-typological characteristics and the aspects of the artifacts which are patinated and often lightly weathered, and falls within the ambit of the Acheulean industries attributed to the Middle Pleistocene. The artifacts, which are nearly always made of flint and which have slightly smoothed and rounded edges, are medium-large in size and are quite thick. There are also forms which can clearly be ascribed to the Protolevallois group, which are often characterised by well organised flake scars on the dorsal side. Flake tools are more sporadic, and at least one handaxe can be attributed to this industry.

Industries of this type have also been found at Cave S.A.F.R.A. and Chiuse d'Idice in the Bologna area (Bisi *et al.* 1982). Sporadic finds have also been made in the Reggio Emilia area (Bisi *et al.* 1980) and at Monte Gazza in Veneto (Peretto 1984). The association with handaxes is evidence that they appertain to the Acheulean industries.

LEVALLOIS TECHNIQUE INDUSTRIES WITH HANDAXES (Fig. 3)

These industries, which were found in the palaeosoils of the top terraces, are homogeneous from the point of view of their physical state and techno-typological characteristics. The artifacts, which are made of flint and flintite, have fresh edges and a brown surface patina. The

Levallois technique is well documented, especially by the flakes, while blades and points are rarer. The platforms are often faceted, sometimes in the form of *chapeau de gendarme*; dihedral and flat platforms are also common, while other types are more rare. The flakes, which are often totally lacking in cortex, are evidence of an intensive exploitation of the cores. The retouch is mainly of the simple, invasive and direct type. Among the tools there are numerous sidescrapers, especially convex lateral ones and, to a lesser extent, transversal and latero-transversal types. There are also some points and blade scrapers. Denticulates, which are often carinated, are rare. Finally there are some well made flint handaxes; one of these, which has a broken tip, has concave sides. The cores include numerous well-made Levallois and discoidal types, and those with unidirectional flake scars with a flat striking platform are also frequent.

These industries fall within the ambit of the late Lower Palaeolithic industries which are well documented along the Apennine foothills in Emilia-Romagna in deposits of aeolian origin attributed to the end of the Middle Pleistocene, such as Ghiardo Cave and Ghiardo Zona Industriale at Reggio Emilia (Bisi *et al.* 1980; Cremaschi & Christopher 1984), Scornetta and Due Pozzi at Bologna (Bisi *et al.* 1996; Lenzi *et al.* 1985; Milliken *et al.* 1996), Oriolo, Pergola, Petrignone, Castiglione, Torrente Conca near Ravenna and Forlì (Antoniazzi 1982; Antoniazzi *et al.* 1984, 1986, 1988; Conti *et al.* 1982; Peretto 1989a; Peretto & Prati 1983; Peretto *et al.* 1987). Sites which can be attributed to the same chronological phase and which have similar industries have also been found at Quinzano (level 5) and Monte Gazzo in Veneto (Leonardi 1942; Peretto 1980, 1984) and in levels G-F at Monte Conero in the Marche (Peretto & Scarpante 1982).

The lithic industries found in the Serra area are a further confirmation of the intensive human occupation of Emilia-Romagna during the Lower Palaeolithic, which the discoveries made during the last twenty years have already widely documented. The contribution made by the Serra area is particularly important since it has revealed a greater articulation of the different phases already distinguished for the Lower and Middle Pleistocene. In particular it highlights how the Acheulean phase is longer than was previously believed. However these are only the preliminary results from this rich archaeological area; in the future further research will be carried out in relation to the new discoveries constantly being made in Emilia-Romagna.

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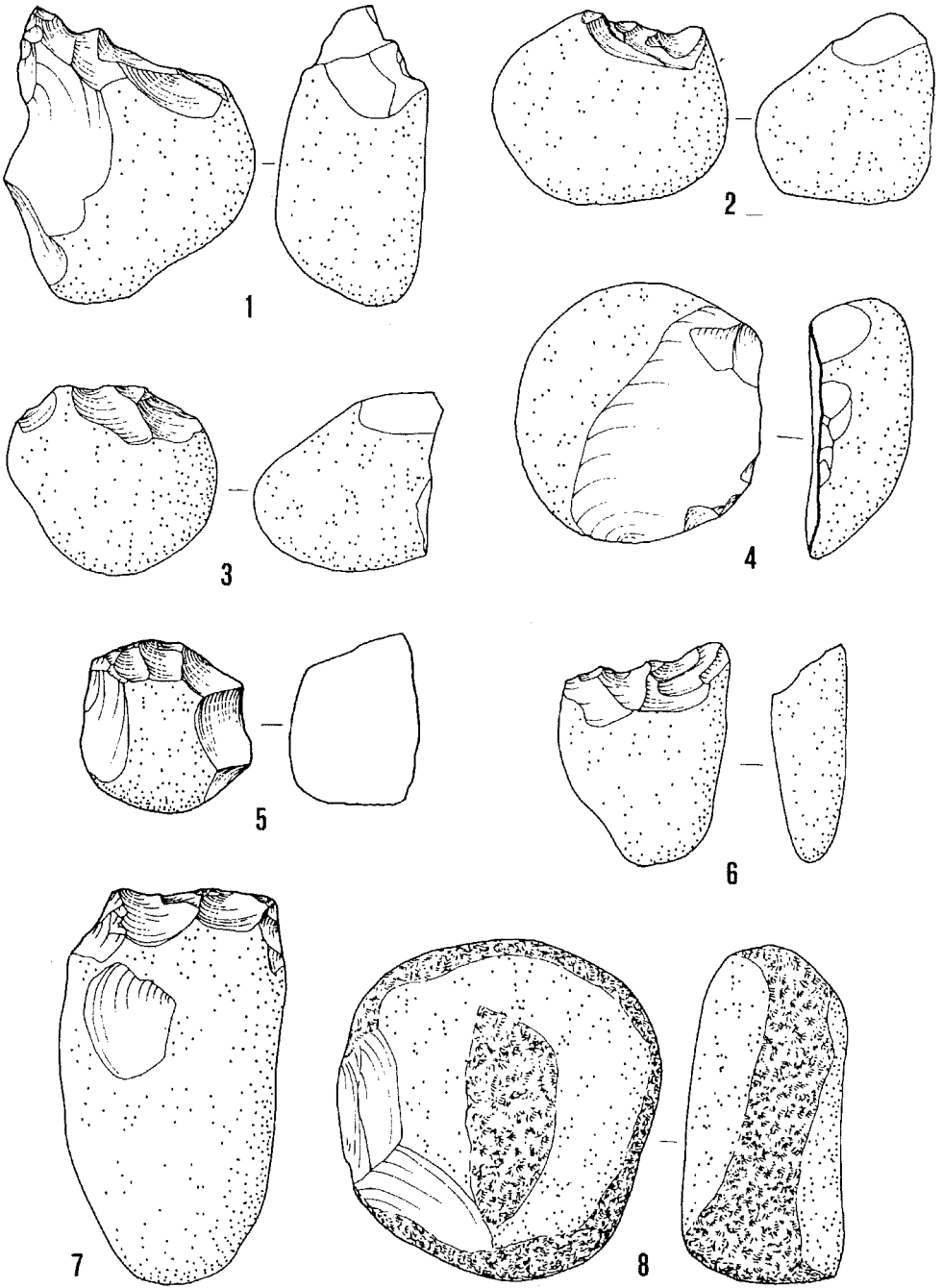


Fig. 1. Castelbolognese-Serra, Sandretta site. Pebble tools.

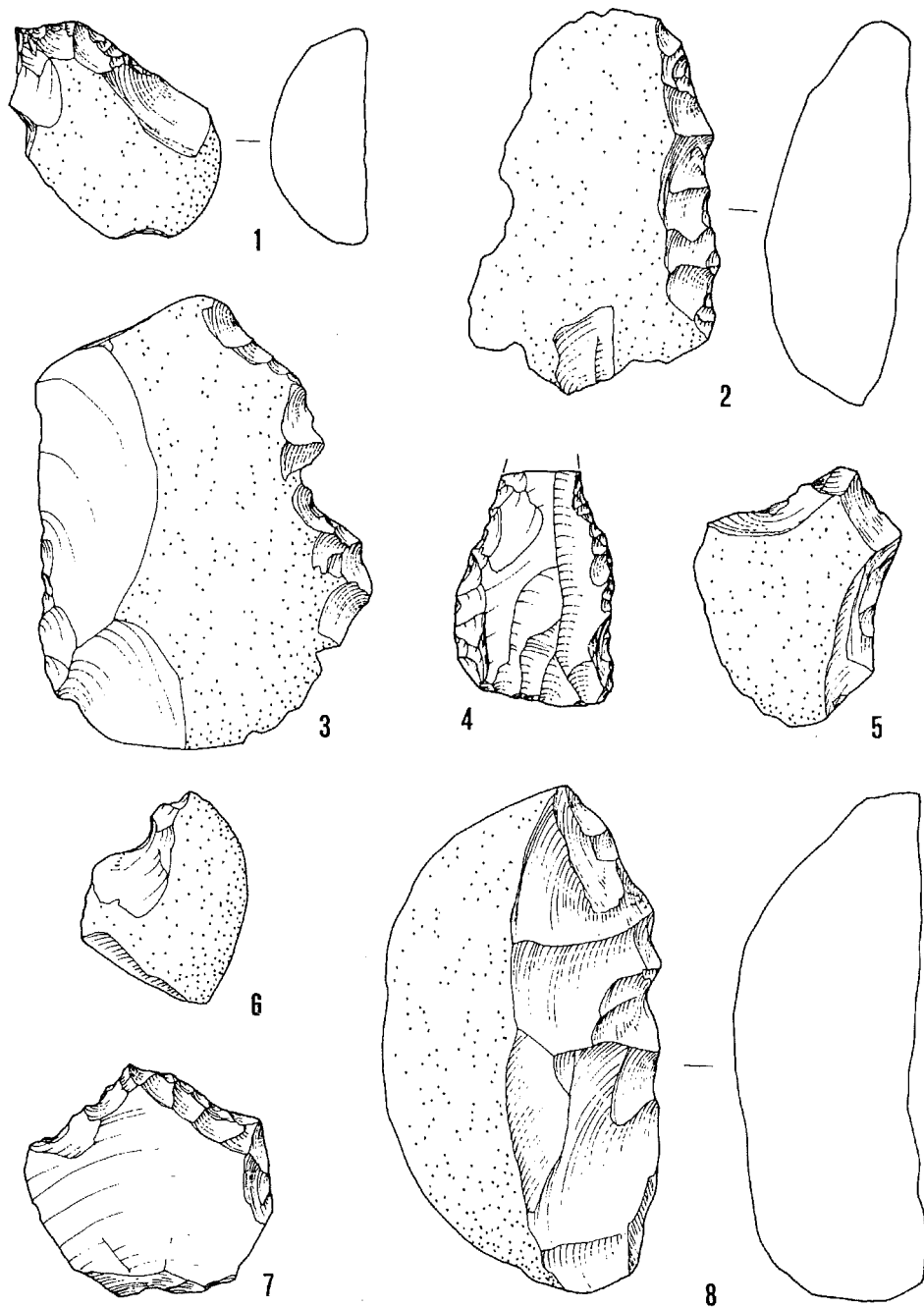


Fig. 2. Castelbolognese-Serra, Ca' del Vento site. Flake assemblages.

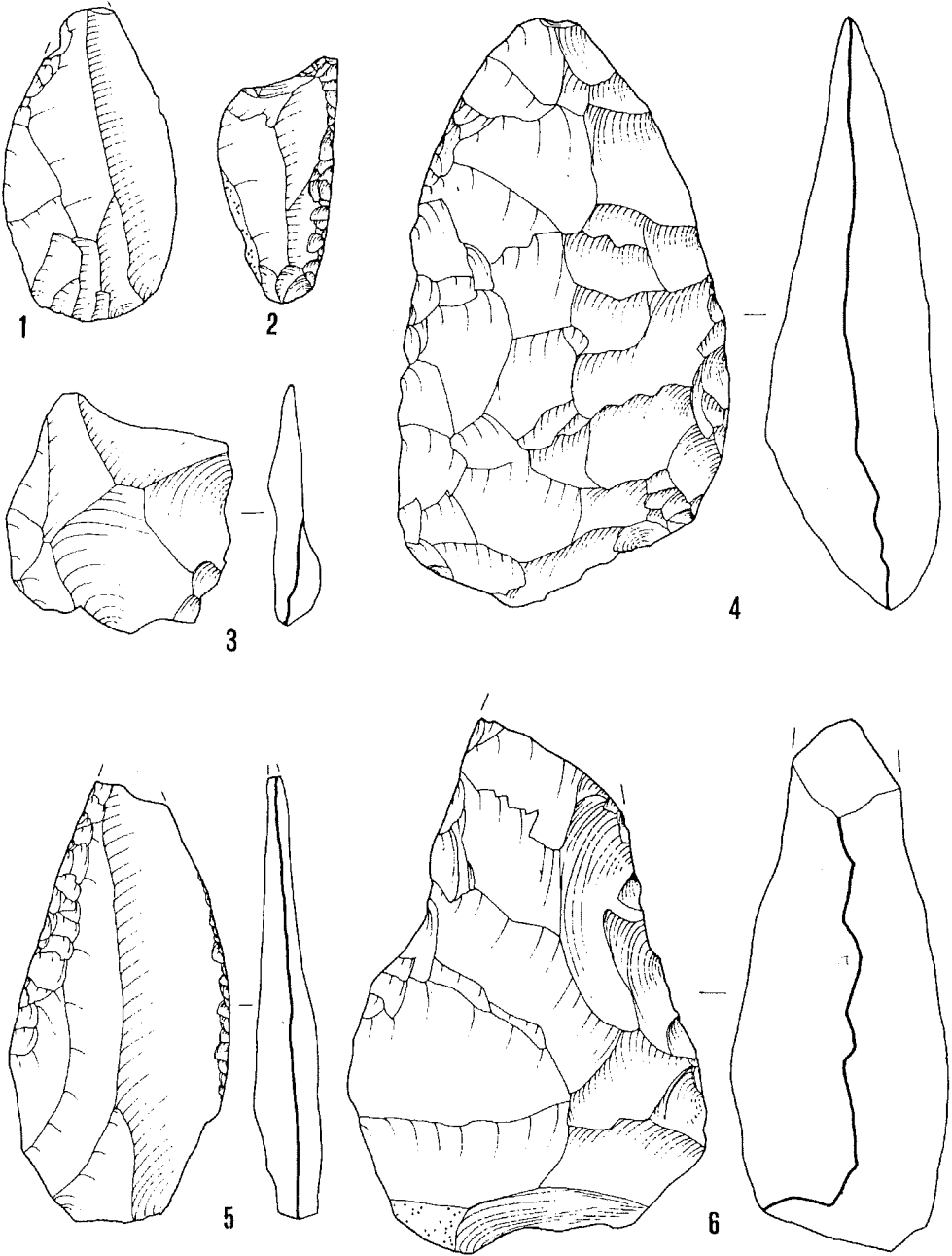


Fig. 3. Castelbolognese-Serra, Strada Selva site ns. 1-5, Fondo Garetta site n. 6. Levallois assemblages with bifaces.