

PRESS RELEASE

**EXPLORATIONS IN ALBANIA, 1930-39: THE NOTEBOOKS OF LUIGI CARDINI,
PREHISTORIAN WITH THE ITALIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSION**

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Six years ago three original handwritten notebooks were found in the archives of the Italian Institute of Human Palaeontology, in Rome. They belonged to Luigi Cardini a prehistorian working for Luigi Ugolini's Italian archaeological mission to Butrint, Albania. Cardini undertook one of the first extensive surveys of prehistoric habitation sites in Albania. His notebooks document his discoveries between 1930-37 made during a series of arduous adventures and explorations; including the investigation of over 60 caves in south-west Albania. The discovery, almost 70 years later, of this unique and unpublished archive led the Butrint Foundation and its Scientific Director, Richard Hodges, Director of the Institute of World Archaeology at the University of East Anglia, to embark on an innovative programme to rediscover the lost caves of Luigi Cardini.

In June 2000 the area around Butrint was examined in detail – places within or close to the new Butrint National Park. Using Cardini's notebooks, local Albanian guides, place names and oral traditions, they were able to re-locate. What they found exceeded all their expectations.

Almost immediately the modern team began to recover Palaeolithic tools of flint and chert belonging to a long time-scale, ranging from the Middle Palaeolithic of *c.*100,000 years ago; the Upper Palaeolithic of *c.*25,000 years ago to the Mesolithic, or post-glacial period, represented by a single but crucial microlith - almost a unique find in Albania. The most exciting aspect of the finds was the presence of a small number of tools reminiscent of the Aurignacian technology, dated to around 40,000 years ago and indicative of the transition between Neanderthals and Modern Humans.

Cardini spent only a few summer expeditions in Albania. Nevertheless, his largely unknown work would have transformed our understanding of early man in the country. His original research and the results of the resurvey are now published in a collaboration between the Butrint Foundation and the British School at Athens, the premier UK archaeological research Institute in the area of the Aegean and Balkans: **EXPLORATIONS IN ALBANIA, 1930-39: THE NOTEBOOKS OF LUIGI CARDINI, PREHISTORIAN WITH THE ITALIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSION**. The edition of Cardini's notebooks assembled by Karen Francis with the additional work of Dr. Ilir Gjepali, and Dr. Robin Skeates adds materially to the complex picture of Albanian prehistory. Cardini himself believed that the important thing in life was not to reach the top, but to work constantly and honestly. This volume will ensure that his name will continue to make an enduring impact on archaeology in Albania.