

# Guattari Cave

## General Information

**Site Name:** Guattari

**Synonym Name(s):**

**Site Type:** cave

**More Info to Site Type:**

**Discovery Year:** 1939

**First Description:**

**Chronological Abstract:**

## Linked Files / Pages

**Collection Item(s):**

**Bibliography:** Cesnola 1996

**Multimedia Files:**

**Linked Pages:**

Italy - Neanderthal  
Wikipedia\_Monte Circeo

**Index:**

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## Location

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**Country:** Italy

**General Location Description:** Monte Circeo is a limestone massif, 541m high and covering 32km. Its southern edge is bordered by the sea. The cave is on the easternmost spur of Monte Circeo, standing near the village San Felice Circeo.

### Coordinates

**Latitude (WGS84):** 41.239° N

**Longitude (WGS84):** 13.097° E

**Altitude:**

**GIS Precision:** GPS Site coordinates

**Other Coordinates:**

## Additional Content

Ascenzi describes the history of this major find: "That same afternoon, in fact, I went down with Guattari into the cave, crawling down the narrow, winding passage, and, when I reached the main space, I realised that the ground was literally strewn with fossil bones and horns, many of them reddened or blackened, and some of them deliberately splintered. Those that came from cervids, bovids and equids were prevailing. These fossils lay scattered on the ground, and could be moved; they were barely covered by a thin layer of limestone incrustation, which often took the form of a kind of inflorescence consisting of small limestone protuberances, which projected and ramified in coral-like shapes.

The main space has an irregularly oval form, it is about 3.65m high and measures about 3.20 x 5m across. On its sides it leads off into a number of smaller caves. On the left as you go in, and pass under the fairly low archway made by the roof, you reach two connected caves, one of them ending in a small pool and the other, of nearly oval form, measuring 4.10 x 5.40m across and 1.80m in height. From now on I will call this the "Antro dell' Uomo" ("Cave of the Man") as it contained the human skull. This skull lay almost exactly at the centre of the cave, a little towards the farther end, together with the splintered bones of cervids, suids, and equids, among stones which had been arranged in a circle. When I saw it, the cranium lay on its top, with its bare facing upwards. But Guattari told me that he had picked it up and that he couldn't exclude the possibility of having put it back, in a different position from its original one, so much so that he remembered having seen the round top of the skull first. This remark, and the nature and distribution of the limestone deposit attached to the skull led me to believe that it lay with its occipital portion facing upwards. As I immediately recognised the presence of marked Neandertal features in the skull, I decided to take it away with me, considering that it would be unwise to leave it there any longer, all the more so because many people (boys, women, people working for Guattari, etc) had gone down into the cave before me, and had taken away various bones. I didn't have the magnesium needed for a photograph. In any case, as the skull had already been moved, the importance of an in situ photograph would have been limited, and, as I have said, the risk attached to leaving it where it was, would have been too great. I also decided not to touch the bone and stones which it was lying among, and I only took with me a small scapula from a cervid which had been touching it." (Ascenzi 1991)

## Pix



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