

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-08028-6 - Lake Habitations and Pre-Historic Remains in the  
Turbaries and Marl-Beds of Northern and Central Italy  
Bartolomeo Gastaldi  
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### **Lake Habitations and Pre-Historic Remains in the Turbaries and Marl-Beds of Northern and Central Italy**

The son of a Turin lawyer, Bartolomeo Gastaldi (1818–79) initially followed in his father's footsteps but then abandoned the law to pursue his passion for geology and palaeontology. Later one of the founders of the Italian Alpine Club, Gastaldi was especially interested in the geology and glaciology of the Alps in his native Piedmont. The mineral gastaldite is named after him. This work, first published in Italian in 1862, is reissued here in the 1865 English translation prepared by Charles Harcourt Chambers (1826–76) for the Anthropological Society of London. Its importance lies in the meticulous descriptions, by Gastaldi and others, of the human remains and artefacts discovered at Stone Age and Bronze Age settlements on the site of lakes and peat bogs to the south of the Alps. Featuring engraved illustrations throughout, the work also includes Gastaldi's summary of discoveries since his book's first appearance.

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BARTOLOMEO GASTALDI  
TRANSLATED BY  
CHARLES HARCOURT CHAMBERS



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Anthropological Society of London.

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LAKE HABITATIONS AND PRE-HISTORIC  
REMAINS IN ITALY.

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GASTALDI.

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LAKE HABITATIONS

AND

PRE-HISTORIC REMAINS

IN THE

*Turbaries and Marl-Beds*

OF

NORTHERN AND CENTRAL ITALY.

BY

BARTOLOMEO GASTALDI,

PROFESSOR OF MINERALOGY IN THE COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

AT

TURIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN AND EDITED BY

CHARLES HARCOURT CHAMBERS,

M.A., F.R.G.S., F.A.S.L.

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## PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

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I DO not think that any apology is needed for bringing forward, in an English form, these memoirs of the discovery in Italy of the remains of its early inhabitants, analogous in character to those which have excited so much interest to the north of the Alps.

The work must be taken simply as a sketch of what has been done by Italians in that direction ; since M. Desor suggested the suspicion of the existence of such monuments of high antiquity south of the Alps. It consists in great part of reports sent to the author by other men of science who were investigating these remains, and consequently, mainly of facts. Cavaliere Gastaldi himself has introduced them by a short summary ; and they are followed by accounts, written by him, of the turbaries in the southern valleys of the Alps, with the inquiry into which he has been most concerned. He has also been so kind as to write for this edition a *précis* of the further discoveries of lake dwellings, made since his memoir was published, which has induced me to alter, with his consent, the title of the work to one more descriptive of its contents, and at the same time more popular.

I may here mention the circumstances which led me to edit the book. During a short stay at Turin, in the

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spring of 1862, I visited the palace of the Valentino, now used as a college, in which is contained the collection of these antiquities then in process of formation. I was so fortunate as to see it under the guidance of the author, to whose energy it was chiefly due, and who was the more interested in expounding it from learning that I had, not long before, examined the Danish remains of a very similar character, from Jutland, in the Museum of Antiquities at Copenhagen; and, on parting, the author was so kind as to give me his memoir, begging that I would make any use of it I thought proper. I consequently translated it, and in process of time offered it to the Anthropological Society, who decided to publish it, with the concurrence of the author, in their series of anthropological works.

The fact that this mode of inquiry, through the exhumation of buried remains, into the life of the tribes who were external to—perhaps long prior to—the various civilisations which, as it were, in a catena, have conveyed to us the histories and traditions of the earlier world, is a science which has had its origin in the last ten years,—should make us extremely careful in ascribing value to these remains at present. Facts, and an ever larger induction, are of far greater value to us than theories.

If these facts, as they increase, seem to conflict, we must take courage from the reflection of Alexander von Humboldt, “that, in an age of such rapid and brilliant progress as the present, it is a sure criterion of the number and value of the discoveries to be hoped for in any particular science, if, though studied with great assiduity and sagacity, its facts still appear for the most part unconnected, with little mutual relation, or even in some instances, in seeming contradiction to each other.”

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In the present state, then, of this part of anthropological science, a set of very careful observations, by competent persons, accurately set forth, is of considerable value to those who are carefully working out the problem of the relations between the early tribes of civilised and uncivilised man, and their migrations ; and perhaps more in its present form than if moulded into a more regular narrative, and divided into sections and chapters, giving an artificial completeness which, as Bacon says, maketh sciences “stand at a stay,” instead of being “added to and supplied further.”

With regard to the use of the words “marl” and “marl-bed”, although some exception is taken to the form of these words in the Italian, namely, “*marna*” and “*mar-niera*”, by Sig. Strobel and Pigorini, who wish to adopt a special word, “*terra mare*,” I have thought it right to keep the word adopted by the author, which is *marna*, the English for which is our ordinary word *marl*.

The word *marna* appears to be of northern origin, or perhaps is an independent form of Pliny’s word, *marga*, which he uses in speaking of red and white marls, “quod genus (terræ) vocant “*margam*” (Galli et Britanni), *Nat. Hist.*, xvii, 35. Pliny’s form, *marga*, is the connecting link which can be identified with the German *mergel*, our marl (*vide* Ziemann’s *Middle German Dict.* in voc.); and tracing the word further back we find, as its pedigree, *marag*; Anglo-Sax., *mearg*, *merg*; Scand., *mergr*, *medulla*, *marrow*, akin to the Sanscrit, *mridu tener* (*tender*) (*vide* Graff’s, *Sprachschatz der alt hoch Deutschen sprache*, quoting numerous authorities of early date).

Hence, the meaning appears to be “soft, marrow-like earth.” The soft character of much, if not all, marl earth is given by partly decomposed organic remains, which also

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gives it its value as manure, which property, as Pliny tells us, was well known to the Greeks, and that it was early used in England we know from Chaucer.

“Se ferd another clerk with astronomie;  
 He walked in the felde for to prie  
 Upon the sterres what ther shuld befall,  
 Til he was in a *marlepit* yfalle.”

*Millere's Tale.*

There seems, then, a perfect propriety in giving the name *marl-bed* as the translation of *marniera* for the locality in which these curious formations—the remains of the past life of ancient tribes—are found; and we need not concern ourselves for the “logical people” of whom Sig. Strobel speaks, who may be tempted to examine the common marls, the character of which is given by myriads of fossil shells and animals.

I shall not here discuss any of the theories that may be held regarding the nations who gave rise to these deposits; what has occurred to me to say I have embodied in one or two notes appended to the report of Signori Strobel and Pigorini upon the marl-beds of Emilia.

C. H. C.

2, *Chesham Place.*

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE EDITION OF 1862.

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STRUCK by the importance which might be attained in Italy, by researches directed to prove the antiquity of the human race, the existence of habitations constructed of wood, anteriorly to the Roman and Etruscan epochs, upon piles in the waters of the lakes and marshes,—to prove, in a word, that our country, like those farther to the north, was inhabited by the races of the ages of *stone* and *bronze*,—I hastened, towards the end of the year 1860, to write a short notice of the discoveries of objects of high antiquity, which had been made up to that time, in Northern and Central Italy.

I hastened, I say, to write that notice,\* in order to advise the students of our country of the interest which such researches might have, and to animate them to de-

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\* Published among the *Transactions of the Italian Society of Natural Science at Milan*, with the title of “Cenni su alcune Armi di Pietra e di Bronzo trovate nell’ Imolese nelle Marniere del Modenese e del Parmigiano, e nelle Torbiere della Lombardia e del Piemonte.”—(Notes upon certain Arms of Stone and Bronze found in the country near Imola, in the Marl-beds of Modena and Parma. and in the Turbaries of Lombardy and Piedmont.)

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dicare themselves to it, with the advantage of the fine season; and the haste which was imposed upon me, prevented me from giving attention to illustrating my works with figures representing the objects found.

Persuaded, nevertheless, of the little value which such publications have when they want the graphic representations of the objects to which they refer, I have ever since had the intention of reprinting those remarks, illustrating them by plates; and it is that which I am now doing, inserting in this reprint the fresh discoveries which have taken place, and the information which has come to me in the course of the year 1861. I give to this reprint the title of *Nuovi Cenni su gli Oggetti di Alta Antichità trovati nelle Torbiere e nelle Marniere dell' Italia*.

Part of the designs, which I now publish, were communicated some time back to M. Keller, President of the Society of Antiquaries at Zurich, and were inserted by him, together with an abridgment of my former remarks, in his fourth memorial upon the lake habitations of Switzerland. I am delighted here to be able to make my acknowledgments to him for the honour which he has done to my work; and for his having courteously furnished me with the number containing those designs, which I wanted, that I might unite them with this reprint.

The discoveries made in the turbaries of Piedmont in 1861 are few, and so I shall have little to add to that part of my work which relates to the pile dwellings of Mercurago; but most valuable notices, on the other hand, have been furnished to me, by several of my friends, regarding objects found in other parts of Italy, and especially in the marl-beds of Emilia. These last have been, in the past year, studied by Professor Strobel, with the

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zeal and care of a passionate naturalist ; so that if the publication which I have now in hand, and which contains all the observations made by him, meets with the approbation of the studious, that approbation will be principally due to him.

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## ERRATA.

Page 15, bottom line of note,	<i>for</i> Thomson	<i>read</i> Thomsen.
„ 65, 21 lines <i>from</i> bottom (note) „	äurochs	„ aürochs.
„ 66, 7 „ „ „	<i>for</i> Rhynoceros	„ Rhinoceros.
„ 69, 1 „ „ top	„ Berté Eugenio	„ Eugenio Berté.
„ 70, 20 „ „ „	<i>dele</i> Paperini	
„ 76, 7 „ „ „	<i>for</i> shieferkohle	„ schieferkohle.
„ 89, 13 „ „ „	Annani	„ Anani.
„ 105, 2 „ „ bottom	Cerro di las Navajas	„ Cerro de los Navajas.