

The barnacles: A new species used to make a Gravettian suspended object from Nerja Cave (Málaga, Spain)

The Cave of Nerja is situated in the Southern Mediterranean coast of Spain, in the province of Málaga. Its stratigraphy goes from the Upper Pleistocene to the Early Holocene – between 30 ky and 3 ky cal BP – and is one of the most important archaeological and paleobiological records of the Western Mediterranean zone in this period. This sequence contains Gravettian, Solutrean, Magdalenian, Epipalaeolithic, Neolithic and Chalcolithic levels.

In this work we present one suspended object from Nerja Cave. This object is made on the plate of a large goose barnacle (*Pollicipes pollicipes* (Gmelin, 1790) and belongs to the oldest levels of *Sala del Vestíbulo* (one of the three chambers of the site). These levels are clearly attributed to the Gravettian and the piece comes from the systematic archaeological excavations directed by Professor Francisco Jordá Cerdá between 1982 and 1987.

Keywords: body ornaments, suspended object, goose barnacle, Upper Palaeolithic, Gravettian, Western Mediterranean.

As we know, the purpose of the Worked Bone Research Group is to improve communication between individuals studying worked animal hard tissues (especially bone, antler and ivory) with a special emphasis on archaeological finds. In this paper we present one newly documented suspended object made on a worked animal hard tissue. This object

is made on the plate of a large goose barnacle from Nerja Cave (Málaga, Spain) and is attributed to the oldest levels of the site, to the Gravettian. Its identification can extend the list of species and raw materials used to make suspended objects in the Upper Palaeolithic, applying a simple technique for its suspension.

Nerja Cave

The Cave of Nerja is situated on the Southern Mediterranean coast of Spain, in the province of Málaga on the northern coast of the Alborán Sea (Fig. 1:1). The cave is located in the area that bridges the high relief zone of the Sierra de Almajara and the shoreline, which lies at 158 meters below sea level and is about a thousand meters from the current coastline.

The cave was discovered in 1959 and has a vast subterranean system, however, the archaeological deposits are found only in the most external halls (Fig. 1:2). These galleries formed a large rock shelter while occupied by human groups, but the area is now partly filled in with sediment. The chambers of archaeological interest are Torca, Mina, and the Vestíbulo (Fig. 1:3).