
Variability in the use of the mousterian denticulates and notches of Navalmaíllo Rock Shelter (Pinilla del Valle, Madrid, Spain)

Belén Márquez^{*†1}, Enrique Baquedano^{‡2,3}, Juan Luis Arsuaga^{§4,5}, and Alfredo Pérez-González^{¶6}

¹Museo Arqueológico Regional de la Comunidad de Madrid (MAR) – Plaza de las Bernardas s/n
28801-Alcalá de Henares (Madrid), Spain

²Museo Arqueológico Regional de la Comunidad de Madrid (MAR) – Plaza de las Bernardas s/n
28801-Alcalá de Henares (Madrid), Spain

³Instituto de Evolución en Africa (IDEA) – C/Covarrubias 36 28010-Madrid, Spain

⁴Centro Univ. Complutense de Madrid- Instituto de Salud Carlos III de Investigación sobre la Evolución y Comportamiento Humanos (UCM-ISCHH) – Avda. Monforte de Lemos 5, Pabellon 14.
28029-Madrid, Spain

⁵Dpto. de Paleontología, Fac. de CC.Geológicas de la UCM – Dpto. de Paleontología, Fac. de CC.Geológicas de la UCM 28040-Madrid, Spain

⁶Centro Nacional de Investigación sobre la Evolución Humana (CENIEH) – Paseo Sierra de Atapuerca,
3 09002-Burgos, Spain

Abstract

Bordes defined a denticulate as a tool with one or more than one non-adjacent edges knapped with a succession of notches. Denticulates and notches are two of the more ubiquitous types of the Mousterian panoply of western Europe. New research suggests that these tools are more complex than expected, from both a typometric and functional point of view. They appear not to be as standardized as appeared before. Moreover, new functional studies point to denticulates as versatile tools.

In this contribution, we present the results of the use-wear analysis of a Mousterian sample of denticulates and notches coming from the Navalmaíllo Rock Shelter (Pinilla del Valle, Madrid, Spain). This site has preserved the remains of some Neanderthal occupations being a campsite where domestic activities have been performed. Navalmaíllo Rock Shelter is, in fact, one of the largest campsites of the Iberian Peninsula. Denticulates and notches dominate the group of retouched tools. The preference for quartz raw materials is a particularity of the site, not very common among other Mousterian sites of the Peninsula. This quartz comes to the site in form of cobbles and fragments taken from dykes collected from the immediate surroundings.

^{*}Speaker

[†]Corresponding author: belen.marquez@madrid.org

[‡]Corresponding author: enrique.baquedano@madrid.org

[§]Corresponding author: jlarsuaga@isciii.es

[¶]Corresponding author: alfredo.perez@cenieh.es

Use-wear on quartz has its own peculiarities due to the special features of the raw material. Nevertheless, the wear marks are usually better preserved than those formed on other traditionally considered being better materials like flint. Previous studies on a small sample from that site pointed to the versatility of denticulates in working on different tasks related to butchering and woodworking. The denticulates examined were used in both a transversal fashion (scraping) to work hard materials like wood or bone and, in less extent, in a longitudinal fashion. Then, we proposed further work on a larger selection to throw more light on the types of activity undertaken. The results of this study are now presented.

Keywords: Denticulate, Notch, Mousterian, Quartz, Neanderthal, Use, wear, Versatility, Iberian Peninsula