
Aterian shell ornaments from El Mnasra stratigraphic Unit 8 (Témara, Morocco)

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Résumé

The presence of Nassariidae shells in North Africa Aterian archaeological context is central into the debate of the emergence of complex behaviors and symbolism during the MSA. The stratigraphic Unit 8 of El Mnasra (Morocco), yielding tanged tools, bone tools and hematite artifacts, dated to the MIS 5 (~110-100 ka), furnish a large number of shells attributed to ornaments (N=282). This analysis aims to furnish new taphonomic data allowing to discuss shell origin and preliminary hypotheses of their used. These shells belong mainly to *Tritia* cf. *gibbosula* and also to *Tritia corniculum* and *Columbella rustica*. Taphonomic analyzes (aspects, morphologies, perforation, smoothed, presence of gravels/shell fragments inside) and comparisons with Pleistocene and actual natural taphocenosis from beach deposits were performed. US 8 El Mnasra sample complete North African discoveries of Nassariidae dating to MIS 5 and allows accurate observations about their variability, and the archaeological and paleoecological context of these objects, and their status in the Aterian culture.

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