
Chronological and behavioural discontinuities at the Neanderthal site of Sima de las Palomas del Cabezo Gordo (Torre Pacheco, Murcia Spain)

Mariano López^{*†1}, Michael Walker^{*‡1}, and María Haber Uriarte^{*§1}

¹Asociación Murciana para el Estudio de la Paleoantropología y el Cuaternario (MUPANTQUAT) – Museo Arqueológico de Murcia, Avenida Alfonso X El Sabio 7, 30008 Murcia, Espagne

Résumé

The Sima de las Palomas del Cabezo Gordo (Torre Pacheco, Murcia Spain) excavation and stratigraphy show Neanderthals there behaved differently at different MIS-5 to MIS-3 times. Excavation has reached a depth of ~6 m. Skeletal remains exist of 13 Neanderthals. The deepest 2 m are, dated by OSL to MIS-5 ~130-100 ka (Walker et al., 2017), contain abundant burnt and unburnt animal bones (mainly ungulates, lagomorphs, tortoise), Mousterian knapped artifacts (chert, marble, limestone, quartz, quartzite), smooth allochthonous spherical cobbles, and Neanderthal teeth and a mandibular fragment. Those deposits were sealed by a solid MIS-4 conglomerate band dated by U-ser to 68-65 ka (Walker et al., 2017). Above it, entombed in incompletely-cemented sloping scree, lay anatomically-connected skeletal remains of a Neanderthal woman, child, and another adult, dated by U-ser to ~55-50 ka (Trinkaus and Walker, 2017; Walker et al., 2012, 2011a,b), with two articulated leopard paws, burnt horse astragali, and knapped chert. MIS-3 sediments accumulated (~45-40 ka: Trinkaus & Walker 2017; Walker et al., 2008) around that partly-consolidated scree slope, filling up the remaining cavity to its rock roof, and containing both a deep ash lens and several fragmentary Neanderthal skeletal elements and Mousterian artifacts, doubtless produced by behaviour beside the shaft mouth. (References: Trinkaus & Walker, 2017, *The People of Palomas, Neandertals from the Sima de las Palomas del Cabezo Gordo, Southeastern Spain* Texas A&M Univ. Press; Walker et al., 2017, Preliminary dating of deep layers at Sima de las Palomas del Cabezo Gordo (Torre Pacheco, Murcia, Spain). *Proceedings of the European Society for the Study of Human Evolution* 6, 210; Walker et al., 2012, The excavation of the buried articulated Neanderthal skeletons at Sima de las Palomas (Murcia, SE Spain). *Quaternary International* 259, 7-21; Walker et al., 2011a, Morphology, body proportions, and postcranial hypertrophy of a female Neandertal from the Sima de las Palomas, southeastern Spain, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA* 108, 10087-10091; Walker et al., 2011b., Neandertal postcranial remains from the Sima de las Palomas del Cabezo Gordo, Murcia, southeastern Spain, *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 144, 505-515; Walker et al., 2010, Neandertal mandibles from the Sima de las Palomas del Cabezo Gordo, Murcia, southeastern Spain, *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 26, 261-272; Walker et al., 2008, Late Neandertals in Southeastern Spain: Sima de las Palomas del Cabezo Gordo, Murcia, Spain, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA* 105, 20631-20636).

*Intervenant

†Auteur correspondant: marianolopez@hotmail.com

‡Auteur correspondant: mjwalke@gmail.com

§Auteur correspondant: mariahaber@um.es

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