

Abstract

The presentation aims to approach life and death during early medieval Cantabria (northern Spain) during the seventh-eighth centuries AD by analysing human skeletons from La Garma. La Garma is an archaeological complex with thirteen sites dating from the Lower Palaeolithic to the Medieval Period. It is an exceptional place to recover the human's History through archaeology, declared World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2000.

Among all the sites, there is a cave in the karstic system named Lower Gallery (LG) with outstanding evidence of an early medieval mortuary ritual. Five intact funerary structures have been discovered in the LG displaying an unusual ritual: corpses have been modified post-mortem. Using an archaeothanatological perspective, in addition to specific taphonomic and bioarchaeological analysis, we are recovering information on the funerary ritual displayed at La Garma and approaching issues related with the life and the death during a not well-known period in northern Spain.