

ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY OF SHELLS OF HELICIDAE FROM THE EDERA CAVE (NORTHEASTERN ITALY)*

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*The Edera Cave, near Aurisina in the Trieste Karst, retains a stratigraphy that extends from the Mesolithic to the modern era. At Sauveterrian layers, many specimens of *Helix cincta* are present, which are considerably crushed, and a small percentage of which are also blackened. Chemical analyses show that the blackened specimens were exposed to a temperature of between 500 and 550 °C, and suggest that many others were destroyed by fire at temperatures of above 700 °C. Consequently, only a part of the *Helix cincta* shells is assumed to be the residue of human meals, since several factors render plausible an accidental combustion of shells already present in the ground before the lighting of Mesolithic hearths.*

KEYWORDS: HELICIDAE; EDERA CAVE; MESOLITHIC; ALIMENTATION; FOURIER TRANSFORM INFRARED SPECTROSCOPY; X-RAY DIFFRACTION