# A143-France-Lespugue-Figurine-Ivory-26,000-24,000 BP

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# Fig. 1 (left). Lespugue-Figurine-Ivory-26,000-24,000 BP. The original drawing of the restored figurine of Lespugue after de Saint-Périer (1924).

# Fig. 2 (right). Lespugue-Figurine-Ivory-26,000-24,000 BP. The damaged figurine of Lespugue after Plazy (2001).

# ****Formal Label:** France, Lespugue Venus Figurine**-26,000-24,000 BP

# ****Accession Number: A000****

**LC Classification:** GN772.22.F7

**Date or Time Horizon:** **26,000-24, 000 BP**

**Geographical Area:** Lespugue, French Pyrenees

**Cultural Affiliation:** the Gravettian period

**Medium:** mammoth tusk ivory

**Dimensions: H** 6 in (150 mm)  
**Weight:**

# ****Provenance**:** This figurine was discovered in 1922 in the Rideaux cave of Lespugue (Haute-Garonne) in the foothills of the Pyrenees by René de Saint-Périer (1877-1950). The Venus of Lespugue resides in France, at the Musée de l'Homme.

**Condition:** Theoriginal was damaged during excavation; this reproduction is restored.

**Discussion:** The Lespugue nude female figurine dated to 26,000 and 24, 000 BP, the Gravettian period, is carved from mammoth tusk ivory. It displays a steatopygous (abnormal accumulation of fat on the buttocks) physiogamy and exaggerated female secondary sexual characteristics, especially extremely large breasts. It also exhibits a rear flap of twisted fibers of spun thread in a braided strip finished with a fringe (de Saint-Périer 1924), which may be the earliest representation of spun thread (Barber 1991: 40) and which may be a code to indicate a married status as in some South African cultures today.

**References:**

# Barber, E. J. W. 1991. *Prehistoric textiles: the development of cloth in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

# de Saint-Périer R. 1912. “Pièges paléolithiques de la grotte des rideaux à Lespugne (Haute-Garonne),” *Bulletins et Mémoires de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris*, VI° Série, 3:3-4, 149-153.

de Saint-Périer René. 1924. “La Statuette féminine de Lespugue (Haute-Garonne).” In: *Bulletin de la Société préhistorique de France*, 21:3, 81-84.

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