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Stone weathering under Mediterranean semiarid climate in the fortress of Nueva Tabarca island (Spain)

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1 Stone weathering under Mediterranean semiarid climate in the fortress of Nueva 2 **Tabarca island (Spain)** 3 4 Martínez-Martínez, J.^{1,2,*}, Benavente, D.¹, Jiménez Gutiérrez, S.³, García-del-Cura, M.A.⁴, 5 Ordóñez, S.¹ 6 ¹ Departamento de Ciencias de la Tierra y del Medio Ambiente. Universidad de Alicante. Campus San 7 Vicente del Raspeig. 03690 San Vicente del Raspeig (Alicante, Spain). 8 ² Instituto Geológico y Minero de España (IGME). Calle Ríos Rosas, 23. 28003 Madrid (Spain) 9 ³ Instituto de Ecología Litoral. C Santa Teresa, 50. 03560 El Campello (Alicante, Spain). 10 ⁴ Instituto de Geociencias (IGEO) (CSIC-UCM). C José Antonio Novais, 12. Ciudad Universitaria 28040 11 Madrid (Spain) 12 * Javier.martinez@igme.es 13 14 Abstract 15 16 The Nueva Tabarca fortress constitutes an exceptional example of baroque architectural 17 heritage. However, the aggressiveness of the local environment and the low suitability of the 18 used building stone cause their fast deterioration. The hydro-mechanical properties of the 19 building stones, the characteristics of their porous system (open porosity and pore size 20 distribution), the global climate of the island and the particular microenvironmental conditions 21 of each studied monument explain the weathering process acting on the porous limestone of 22 Nueva Tabarca. 23 24 Results reveal that Halite crystallization and wind erosion are the main weathering agents. On 25 the one hand, wind plays a critical weathering action because it controls the salt crystallization 26 process, the abrasion by wind-blown particles, as well as the wind-driven rain impact. Different 27 weathering forms are related to each erosion mechanism. On the other hand, the relative 28 humidity in the island determines the agressiveness of the halite crystallization process. Salt 29 damage activity was calculated quantifying not only the number of halite crystallization-30 dissolution transitions, but also the duration of the driest periods. 31 32 Finally, a novel parameter (Equivalent Years, Y_{ea}) is defined in order to quantify the 33 representativeness of standarized artificial ageing tests. Y_{eq} expresses the number of years of 34 natural ageing required for achieving the same weathered state of rocks after laboratory 35 procedures. A wide range of Y_{eq} values are obtained for the studied rocks (from 8 to 165 36 years), showing a strong dependency with both the exposure time as well as the agressiveness 37 of the environment. 38 39 Key words: porous limestone, calcarenite, halite, aeolian erosion, salt crystallization, 40 41 1. Introduction 42 43 Porous limestones probably constitute the most important stone resource as building material 44 in the architectural heritage of the coastal cities of the southwestern Mediterranean region. 45 Tens of historic sites were built using this type of rock due to their workability, aesthetic

46 appeal and availability. Some representative examples are: the use of Sabucina stone in Sicily

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