Barremian (Lower Cretaceous) ammonites from Cuba: An assemblage rich on representatives of the Family Pulchelliidae. Biostratigraphic and paleobiogeographic implications.

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Barremian (Lower Cretaceous) ammonites from Central Cuba are studied for systematic and biochonostratigraphic purposes. The fossils under study come from previous and recent sampling from different Barremian stratigraphic exposures of the Veloz Formation, a lithostratigraphic unit of the Placetas Belt within the Villa Clara Province. The Placetas Belt is a Cuban tectonostratigraphic unit that records the sedimentation originated in the Tethyan basins to the south of the North American Margin from the Late Jurassic through the Cretaceous. A rich stratigraphically controlled assemblage of taxa belonging to the Family Pulchelliidae conforms the focus of the studied material, allowing for new discussions on the geographical distribution of this taxon within the Tethyan Realm. Preliminary results suggest that the ammonite association is predominated by representatives of the Subfamilies Pulchelliinae and Psilotissotiinae belonging to the genera and subgenera Pulchellia (Pulchellia), P. (Heinzia), Subpulchellia, Nicklesia, and Psilotissotia. These coiled ammonites were sampled from the same stratigraphic levels together with a rich assemblage of small heteromorph ammonites belonging to the Subfamily Leptoceratoidinae. The data herein discussed represent the first detailed systematic reports of these taxa in the Caribbean Islands, widening their paleobiogeographic significance and allowing for precise long distance correlations of standard Barremian ammonite zonations between Cuba and other areas of the world.