

6. Aproximaciones zooarqueológicas al pasado de Aisén continental (Patagonia Central Chilena)

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Abstract

Three large zooarchaeological assemblages from contrasting environments in Aisén (XI Region, Chile) were analyzed using the same procedures. Sites studied were Baño Nuevo, Alero Fontana and Alero El Toro. This is an interesting methodological exercise in itself, as it allows the recording of assemblages dominated by different species (*i.e.*, guanaco vs. huemul) and with different richness and diversity profiles. Moreover, it represents a first approach towards hypotheses related to site function and seasonality. Since we do not believe the sites are contemporary, it is not reasonable to attempt reconstructing settlement/subsistence patterns at this point. We do believe, however, that archaeofaunas are particularly valuable for studying non-residential sites containing non-diagnostic lithic assemblages, those most often generated by highly mobile hunter-gatherers.

This comparison allows the detection of several important differences between the analysed assemblages. Fragmentation, for instance, is much more important at Alero El Toro than at the other sites, and there are also clear differences in terms of skeletal frequencies and cut patterns. The major differences, however, are related to the taxonomic profiles especially compared to the available faunal resources in the surrounding environment. The taxonomic profile from Alero Fontana, for instance, is heavily biased towards huemul, suggesting a specialized hunting locality occupied during the winter. While at Baño Nuevo a certain specialization in guanaco is indicated, the assemblage does not reveal a seasonal bias, thus suggesting a residential camp in the context of a highly mobile system. Finally, the taxa represented at Alero El Toro seem to be a basically random collection, thus suggesting a specialized locality not related to hunting, but perhaps a stop en-route.

The comparison of the available resources with the taxonomic profile recognized from the archaeological bones represents an interesting way of conjoining modern zoological and archaeozoological techniques towards framing hypotheses related to archaeological site function.

Resumen

El análisis de tres colecciones zooarqueológicas relativamente grandes provenientes de diferentes ambientes de Aisén (XI Región, Chile) permite documentar, a través de la aplicación estandarizada de un mismo método de registro, conjuntos muy distintos, y aproximarnos a la discusión de temas como el espectro dietético o el perfil de frecuencias esqueléticas reflejado en cada sitio. Los sitios comparados no son necesariamente contemporáneos, pero el enfoque pretende adelantar hipótesis acerca de la funcionalidad de los sitios, estaciones de ocupación y tecnologías de subsistencia. El acercamiento zooarqueológico puede ser especialmente valioso en el estudio de sitios con pocas evidencias artefactuales diagnósticas, para acercarse a un mejor conocimiento de la diversidad y especificidad funcional de la mayoría de los sitios generados en sistemas de cazadores-recolectores de alta movilidad.