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New Directions in Southwestern Zooarchaeology

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Zooarchaeology has occupied a peculiar place within the archaeology of the American Southwest. While archaeologists with an interest in animal bone have worked here from the nineteenth century onward, and the presence of taxa such as macaws, domestic dogs, and domestic turkeys as well as taxa more commonly used in subsistence in southwestern zooarchaeological assemblages is of interest to archaeologists outside the Southwest as well as within it, the southwestern record has not figured prominently within the history of North American zooarchaeology. In the hopes of increasing the reach of southwestern zooarchaeology, this special issue presents three papers, each reflecting a potential new direction in southwestern zooarchaeology.

La zooarqueología ha ocupado un lugar peculiar dentro de la arqueología del suroeste de los Estados Unidos. Los arqueólogos interesados en huesos de animales han trabajado aquí desde el siglo XIX y la presencia de restos animales como guacamayos, perros domésticos y pavos domésticos así como los taxones más comúnmente utilizados en subsistencia, en los ensambles zooarqueológicos del sudoeste son de interés para los arqueólogos de el suroeste y en otros lugares. Sin embargo, la zooarqueología del sudoeste no ocupa un lugar destacado en la historia de la zooarqueología estadounidense. Con la esperanza de aumentar el perfil de zooarqueología en el suroeste, este volumen especial presenta tres artículos, cada uno de los cuales refleja una posible nueva dirección en zooarqueología del suroeste.

KEYWORDS Archaeozoology, North American Zooarchaeology, History of Archaeology, Birds, Ritual, Meta-analysis

Zooarchaeology may be defined as the study of animal remains from archaeological sites (Reitz and Wing 2008), but beyond this broad definition, the field covers a wide array of research. Studies of animal sacrifice, ritual behaviors, domestication and husbandry, subsistence, and environmental reconstruction are all zooarchaeological

topics. Zooarchaeologists are interdisciplinary researchers, often trained in multiple fields including biology, paleontology, ecology, geography, and anthropology, who seek to merge the broad disciplines of zoology and archaeology to answer questions about past (and sometimes present) human lifeways. Zooarchaeological research is expected to strike some sort of balance between understanding the evolutionary life history strategies, biogeography, and ecology of non-human animals on the one hand, and how and why these non-human animals were incorporated into the lives of humans on the other. Zooarchaeologists in regions around the world have grappled with the tension between these two approaches (Casteel 1976:6; deFrance 2009; Twiss 2012), and the zooarchaeologists of the American Southwest are no exception.

Zooarchaeological research in the American Southwest has occupied a peculiar place within the region's archaeological history. Archaeologists with an interest in animal bone have worked here from the nineteenth century onward (Fewkes 1904; Kidder 1951; Morris 1919). The recovery of exotic animals such as macaws (Olsen 1967; Olsen and Olsen 1974), of domestic animals such as dogs and turkeys (Olsen 1968, 1974, 1976), and the location of these and other animals in contexts suggesting ritual activity and craft production as well as subsistence uses has ensured that southwestern archaeologists, including many whose primary analytical interests are not zooarchaeological, have taken an interest in animal remains (see, for example, Crown 2016; Minnis et al. 1993; Plog and Watson 2012). With all of this, one might expect the southwestern record to figure prominently within the history of North American zooarchaeology. This is, however, not the case (see discussion in Gifford-Gonzalez 2010).

The development of North American zooarchaeology, which took place between the 1930s and 1960s, can be linked to the work of a handful of prominent individuals whose personal research interests were not solely focused on the American Southwest (see discussions in Grayson 1984; Lyman 2016; Peres 2014; Reitz and Wing 2008; Robison 1978, 1987). As zooarchaeology developed as a field within North American archaeology, zooarchaeological reports correspondingly began to appear within southwestern archaeological literature (e.g., Hargrave 1939; Harris 1968, 1976). As in other regions, these reports were often "laundry lists," containing little accompanying interpretation about the human behaviors resulting in the accumulation of the archaeofaunas under investigation (see Lyman 2015; Reitz and Wing 2008). While laundry lists can be both significant and useful, because such reports do not explicitly address research questions they are often ignored by non-specialists.

North American zooarchaeology began to pull away from laundry lists in the 1970s, resulting in more visibility of zooarchaeology within archaeology as well as beyond it (Lyman 2015; Reitz and Wing 2008). Why has the Southwest lagged behind in this regard? One possible contributor is analyst isolation. Unlike nearby regions such as the Great Basin and California, the zooarchaeological specialists in the Southwest since the 1970s have largely been based outside the region. While there are notable exceptions to this rule, the exceptions often are or have been part-time Southwesternists with research programs outside the Southwest as well as within it, working outside the university system, or both. This has

encouraged independent approaches to archaeological problems, a situation reflected in the (lack of) publication of edited volumes: regionally-oriented edited books and journal issues focusing on zooarchaeology are frequently produced by zooarchaeologists outside the region (e.g., Arroyo-Cabrales and Johnson 2008; Glassow and Joslin 2012; Graf and Schmitt 2007; Peres 2014), but volumes focusing on the zooarchaeological record of the Southwest are rare. While independent approaches are just as valid as collaborative ones, a research community may help to increase southwestern zooarchaeology. Such regional and disciplinary transcendence is crucial if Southwest zooarchaeologists want to use the data they generate to address global problems (i.e., Kintigh et al. 2014).

It was with the idea of supporting the southwestern zooarchaeological research community that Dombrosky and Jones organized a session at the 39th Annual Society of Ethnobiology meetings in March 2016, titled “Zooarchaeology in the Southwest/Northwest: New Pathways and Future Directions.” Over the course of this full-day session, 14 papers on the zooarchaeology of the American Southwest and Northern Mexico through time were presented. Certain common research themes emerged, both from the papers and from the discussion that followed them: an increase in meta-analyses; the application of zooarchaeological data to non-archaeological fields; the use of molecular techniques such as stable isotope analysis; issues of appropriate quantification; and a focus on classes of animals other than mammals, particularly birds and fish.

This volume is the result of that session. It contains three papers, each of which represents one of the session themes. Schollmeyer contributes a meta-analysis from the Mimbres region, attacking issues of quantification to identify long-term environmental resilience. Cordero uses avifauna to argue for a change in the Rio Grande flyway in the fourteenth century in response to changing agricultural practices. Finally, Ainsworth and colleagues present new quantitative methods for identifying the ritual use of birds. We suggest that these themes, along with the others that arose in the session, represent new directions in the zooarchaeology of the Southwest—ones which will, we hope, lead to more research, more collaboration, and more visibility of zooarchaeology, in the Southwest and beyond.

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