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# Environmental influence on human occupation changes in subtropical inland Chile, Combarbalá

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## Résumé

Archaeological research in the subtropical band between 31° and 32° S west of the Andes has been biased in favor of coastal settlements which appear to have been redundantly occupied since the onset of the Holocene. Conversely, the occupation of the inland region has received little attention in terms of surveys, excavations, radiocarbon dating, assemblage characterization, paleoenvironmental records and papers published. In the coast, diminishing human signatures have been recognized between 8000-6200 cal BP and 2300-1800 cal BP and, at least during the first interval, the trough appears to be climate driven since these period is associated to enhanced aridity according to local paleoenvironmental reconstructions. However, ages in these time ranges have been recorded in the inland area of Combarbalá, where we have conducted investigations since 2003. Contexts under rock shelters, of very little representation in the coast -where occupations are observed in the form of shell middens-, are remarkably common in a conglomerate volcanic unit in Combarbalá, and have yielded evidence useful for discussing differences in the use of space of mobile communities for the region. We present new data on the excavation and dating of La Coipa 1, Techo Negro, Los Bullines, Los Zorros, Lucero and La Olla sites which provide a complementary perspective on the archaeological information gathered in the broader region. These sites show primarily the use of local resources such as local stone tool selection and inland prey choices. Preliminary stable isotope information is consistent with inland diets. Although the distribution of the archaeological information of this region remains uneven, data gathered on inland locations over the last decades as well as the one presented here allow for more accurate understanding of human regional trends.

**Mots-Clés:** environmental change, Andes, inland occupation, use of space

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