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# Study of vertebrates from Lumentza site (Lekeitio, northern Iberian Peninsula)

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## Résumé

Lumentza site is located in the coastal town of Lekeitio (Bizkaia), at 114 m above sea level and on the south hillside of Lumentza or Calvario Mount. The principal access to the cave, which is oriented to south-west, leads through to spacious and rounded hall. This cavity has a high vault and dimensions of 17.8 m in the major axis and 8.5 m in the minor axis, with an area of approximately 220 m.

Three archaeological interventions have been carried out in Lumentza: the first one in 1926 and 1929, the second between 1963 and 1964 and the last one between 1984 and 1993. The samples studied in this work were provided by the last intervention, when the actual methodology of washing and sieving the sediment to recover microvertebrates was applied. During this third field season, three archaeological levels have been differentiated. Superficial levels (I and IIA) are a mix of modern and prehistoric remains. The second level is divided among other two sublevels: IIB and IIC. In sublevel IIB Bronze Age and Chalcolithic period occupations have been found, while the sublevel IIC can be attributed to an advanced phase of Neolithic. Finally, level III has a limited archaeological record, and there is not any diagnostic element to attribute it to a chronocultural specific period. The remains studied in this work come from sublevel IIB, sublevel IIC and level III.

In Lumentza, the amount of small vertebrate remains is scarce, whereas macrovertebrate remains are abundant. This is due to the fact that, normally, microvertebrates are accumulated by nocturnal predators, which are not present during the human occupation moments. For this reason, sites with long time human occupations are usually very poor in microfaunal remains.

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Macrovertebrate remains are mainly compounded by domestic animals. The livestock use during Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Bronze Age is based on domestic bovine, ovicaprine and porcine with pastoral cabins. The taxon with the largest number of remains is the bovine, since it is the animal that provides highest meat mass. Remains produced by hunting practices are scarce already in the Neolithic, and practically disappear throughout subsequent occupations. The small vertebrate assemblage is dominated by *Apodemus sylvaticus-flavicollis* and *Anguis fragilis*. The abundance of those taxa in the Cantabrian region is indicative of relatively wet and warm periods, similar to nowadays. Apart of these, remains of *Microtus agrestis*, *Microtus (Terricola) sp.*, *Arvicola sp.*, *Glis glis*, *Talpa sp.* and *Sorex araneus-coronatus* have been found in minor proportion.

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