

Historiography of Archaeozoology in Europe

Main Organizer:

Commission « Méthodes et théorie en archéologie », UISPP

Djillali Hadjouis

(Centre National de Recherches Préhistoriques, Anthropologiques et Historiques, Alger)

Louis Chaix

(Laboratoire d'Archéologie africaine & anthropologie, Université de Genève)

Abstract:

Archaeozoology—or zooarchaeology, depending on the country—studies the relationships between humans and animals from the beginnings of humanity up to the industrial era. The primary sources of evidence in this discipline are the bones left by various vertebrates, the shells of molluscs, and other more fragile or ephemeral remains such as integumentary elements (skins, hair, feathers, etc.). From the earliest times, humans and their ancestors were in contact with nature, and particularly with animals. Beyond their dietary value, certain animal forms may have appeared to them as strange or aesthetically appealing.

Since the seventeenth century, numerous naturalists, palaeontologists, palaeoethnologists, and zoologists have taken an interest in animal remains recovered from natural or archaeological sites. Their research has shown, above all, that in the latter contexts, anthropic activity played a predominant role—particularly in the modification of, or the absence of, certain skeletal parts.