

EDITORIAL

Conservation and Taphonomy in Archaeology and Ethnography: From Institutional Collections to Actualistic Field Studies in Argentina. Editorial Note

Conservación y tafonomía en arqueología y etnografía: de las colecciones institucionales a los estudios actualísticos de campo en Argentina. Nota editorial

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In the first half of 2026, we focused on collaborations with guest editors across research lines that are grounded in diverse objectives and methodologies. This reflects the thematic breadth and the multiple challenges that characterize archaeology and related disciplines. This issue has brought together original research experiences and topics that involve the generation of knowledge, and the development of methodologies applied in the field, laboratories, repositories, and museums. These contributions stem from national conferences as well as debates and updates discussed in workshops on various thematic areas.

Within this framework, the first dossier is entitled “Conservation of Archaeological and Ethnographic Collections,” and was organized by Soledad Tancoff, Silvana Di Lorenzo, and María Marta Reca, whose conservation work is carried out in leading national institutions such as the *Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales “Bernardino Rivadavia”* (Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, Buenos Aires, Argentina), the *Museo Etnográfico “Juan B. Ambrosetti”* (Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina), and the *Museo de La Plata* (Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina), respectively. These institutions host a significant body of researchers in the natural and anthropological sciences and, at the same time, house the largest number of archaeological and ethnographic collections in the country.

This dossier brings together eleven original papers on the management, administration, and conservation of anthropological collections in museums and research institutions with archaeological and ethnographic repositories. The contributions offer an update to

methods and techniques for collection management and include experiences in collection digitization; preventive conservation strategies for archaeological and ethnographic materials; reflections and activities concerning the curation of collections and obsolete objects held by museums; interdisciplinary studies aimed at the enhancement and valorization of mummies; and methodological approaches applied to modern osteological collections, among other topics.

The second dossier is entitled “Discussion and Updates in Actualistic Taphonomy,” organized by two guest editors, Clara Otaola and José Manuel López, both faculty members in the Archaeology Department at the *Facultad de Filosofía y Letras* of our university. Otaola is also a researcher at the *Instituto de Evolución, Ecología Histórica y Ambiente* in San Rafael, a joint institute of the *Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas* and *Universidad Nacional Tecnológica* (CONICET-UTN). This dossier includes four articles that present analytical approaches based on systematic sampling designs, long-term monitoring, and continuous updating of theoretical and methodological frameworks, to address the complexity of the natural and cultural interactions involved in the formation of the archaeological record.

The papers analyze current taphonomic processes in different environmental contexts in Argentina, including guanaco deaths caused by entanglement in fences in Patagonia; carnivore-related taphonomy in the Dry Chaco; the identification of taphonomic processes in Mendoza’s mountains (central-western Argentina) through the application of systematic surface sampling; and, finally, the evaluation of weathering processes affecting bone remains processed by human populations in the Deseado Massif, Santa Cruz Province (Patagonia).

We extend our sincere thanks to the reviewers of this issue, whose work required a joint effort by the guest editors and the journal’s Editorial Committee. We believe that this commitment is reflected in a robust volume, in terms of the number of contributions as well as their novelty and quality. We are confident that continuing to support open science is a concrete way to contribute to the strengthening of public, critical, and high-quality science in Argentina and Latin America.