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Indigenous animal management practices on the eve of Columbus' landfall: Isotopic and zooarchaeological investigations in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica

Shev, G.T.

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Propositions

1. Human-animal relations in the Indigenous pre-1492 Caribbean involved a complex interplay between the environmental practices of Indigenous people and the effects these had on the animals coinhabiting environments.
2. Indigenous peoples in the Greater Antilles were not living in harmony with pristine environments, but actively created, curated, and altered environments to suit their needs however in an arguably more sustainable way than Western approaches.
3. There is a greater reliance on terrestrial animals seen in sites located inland compared to coastal sites which may also relate to 'garden hunting' practices and indicate that agriculture was more intensively practiced at these inland sites.
4. The notion that Indigenous peoples were 'domesticating' animals in the Greater Antilles is too simplistic and too ingrained in Western ontological discourse derived from the study of the progression of domestication practices, agriculture, and urbanism in Eurasia.
5. Isotopic analysis of animal remains can highlight dietary linkages between humans and animals and can demonstrate less direct forms of interactions such as the scavenging of human refuse or garden plots by synanthropic beneficiaries of human environmental practices.
6. Niche construction theory provides a viable theoretical background for elucidating dietary linkages between humans and animals and placing these phenomena within the greater schema of human-environmental interactions.
7. Environmental management practices in the pre-1492 Caribbean can only be understood by holistically combining several interdisciplinary approaches to the study of archaeological material.
8. It is pivotal when conducting archaeological research in the Caribbean to involve the expertise, input and collaboration of local researchers and institutions, and to share one's knowledge to foster trust and future cooperation.
9. Not all forms of animal management necessarily constitute a pathway towards domestication, nor is it necessary to domesticate a species to ensure steady populations and therefore reliable sources of food for human societies.
10. As educators of past lifeways, archaeologists have a responsibility to inform people about alternative perspectives and methods for the sustainable management of natural resources that dually provide for human societies while promoting biodiversity.