APPENDIX J

Faunal Analysis

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The faunal sample recovered by the Chalcatzingo excavations is relatively small. This is due primarily to the poor preservation of both animal and human osseous remains at the site (see also Chapter 8). Because of the sample size, we cannot deal as critically with the data as could be wished. Comparisons of faunal quantities between house areas or calculations to estimate live weight, biomass, meat yield, etc., would yield statistically insignificant or misleading results.

The faunal remains in the assemblage were recovered by screening during the excavations. Much of this material consists of small, unidentifiable fragments. A few whole or partial skeletons, apparently the result of intentional burial, were also encountered. The major portion of the faunal remains was identified by Ticul Alvarez, while I identified a few later additions.

Several vegetation zones around Chalcatzingo are represented by the faunal remains. Among the more important species, deer and fox probably inhabited the Pithecellobium Woodland zone (see Chapter 3 for an explanation of these zones). Rabbits were exploited in the Huizache Grasslands, and both they and foxes are also found today on the site itself (Interior Valley Cerros zone). Dogs, of course, were domesticated and thus not restricted to particular ecological zones.

The faunal data are presented in tabular form and briefly discussed. Table J.1 shows the distribution of identified faunal remains by genus, and Table J.2 presents these data by phase. The counts in these two tables refer to the total number of fragments, not minimum number of individuals or weight. The few skeletons encountered are indicated separately and are not included in the counts. These counts are given only to provide a general estimate of the relative importance of the different species at Chalcatzingo.

Amate Phase

Few Amate phase (Early Formative) areas were excavated during the project, and therefore the faunal sample from this phase is quite small. The best remains come from Amate phase features underlying the PC Structure 6 Cantera phase walls and floor. Here in addition to deer (3 fragments), dog (4), and rabbit (2), excavations recovered a parrot tibia, a turkey humerus, a fragment of a turtle carapace, and two complete bird skeletons. One of these skeletons, of a *calandria* (oriole), was found in association with an Early Formative lobed bottle. A crow skeleton found in the same area had no associated artifacts. Both bird skeletons were in close association with an Early Formative wall.

Barranca Phase

Only two Barranca phase house structures (on T-9B and N-2) were found during the excavations. In addition, a trash pit from a destroyed Barranca phase house was found near the T-25 altar (see Chapter 7), and faunal remains were recovered from strata of this phase in four other areas. Within the sample, deer are relatively rare, particularly in comparison to their presence in the Amate and

Table J.1. **Distribution of Faunal Remains by Genus**

		Number of Specimens	
Class and Genus	*Common Name*	*Class*	*Genus*
Reptilia		3	
Kinosternon	Turtle		3
Aves		4 (+ 2 skeletons)	
Accipitridae	Hawk		1
Anatidae	Goose, duck		1
Amazona	Parrot		1
Meleagris	Turkey		1
Icteridae	Oriole		(1 skeleton)
Corvidae	Crow		(1 skeleton)
Mammalia		255 (+ 5 skeletons)	
Didelphis	Opossum		1
Sylvilagus	Rabbit		69
Orthogeomys	Gopher		2
Canis	Dog		134 (+ 3 skeletons)
Urocyon	Fox		5
Procyon	Raccoon		1
Nasua	Coatimundi		1
Mephitis	Skunk		1
Felis	Puma		1
Dicotyles	Peccary		(2 skeletons)
Odocoileus	Deer		40

Table J.2. **Distribution of Faunal Remains by Phase**

	Phase or Period				
Class and Genus	*Amate*	*Barranca*	*Cantera*	*Classic*	*Undated*
Reptilia					
Kinosternon	1	1	1		
Aves					
Accipitridae					1
Anatidae		1			
Amazona	1				
Meleagris	1				
Icteridae	(1 skeleton)				
Corvidae	(1 skeleton)				
Mammalia					
Didelphis		1			
Sylvilagus	2	21	36	8	2
Orthogeomys				1	1
Canis	6	30 (+ 1 skeleton)	78 (+ 2 skeletons)	14	6
Urocyon		2	3		
Procyon	1				
Nasua		1			
Mephitis			1		
Felis			1		
Dicotyles			(2 skeletons)		
Odocoileus	4	2	30	2	2

Cantera phase samples.

In addition to dog and rabbit bone from the T-9B and N-2 house areas, a fragment of a turtle carapace fragment was found in T-9B, and each house excavation yielded a fox limb bone. The house trash pit from T-25 had surprisingly few faunal remains, yielding only an opossum mandible, some small unidentifiable bone fragments, and the skeleton of a young dog. A goose or duck tibia fragment was recovered from Barranca phase levels of the T-29 excavations.

Cantera Phase

Because 70 percent of the total volume of excavations pertained to the Cantera phase, it not surprisingly yielded the largest quantity of faunal remains. Of the six house areas providing data, it is unfortunate that only one (T-23) was not highly destroyed by plowing or erosion. The remains from the other excavations are from Cantera phase materials underlying the house floor zones and/or from disturbed house floor areas within the plow zone.

The T-23 household cluster includes a trash dump on T-21. Deer and dog remains were found within this trash deposit, while excavations of the house revealed deer, dog, and rabbit bone, as well as a single fox vertebra. Faunal remains from the T-9A house area included a fragment of a turtle carapace and skeletons of two small collared peccaries. Faunal remains other than dog, deer, and rabbit also included examples of fox (PC Str. 1, T-25 Str. 2) and single examples of skunk (T-25 Str. 2) and puma (T-11 Str. 1).

Classic Period

The fauna exploited during the Classic period were not significantly different from those of the Formative period except that deer are only slightly represented in the remains derived from refuse. Fauna recovered from the T-20 house structure, the T-11 intrusive pits, and general Classic period levels on T-17 are almost exclusively dog and rabbit. Whether the absence of deer is due to sampling or represents an actual absence cannot be determined from our data.

Discussion

Of the identifiable fauna recovered at Chalcatzingo, dog remains are the most abundant. Deer and rabbit are the only other important animals, and most other species are represented by a single fragment. Thus, as far as we can tell, there was little interest in exploiting a wide variety of animal resources.

Most of the dog remains recovered are skull and teeth fragments. Only a few of the long bones show signs that they were used for food, but we surmise that the majority of them were broken up to extract the marrow, thus accounting for the poor representation of dog long bones among the identifiable remains. In fact, the presence of dog remains in quantities essentially equal to or greater than deer or rabbit suggests they were a common, domesticated food source at Chalcatzingo.

Ticul Alvarez (personal communication) notes that of all the sites whose fauna he has analyzed up to this time, this site is the first in which dog remains predominate over deer and rabbit. The quantity of dog remains is so great that it raises the possibility that the local supply of dogs or dog meat may have been supplemented from elsewhere as tribute or exchange. On the other hand, while the quantity of dog remains may be unusual for central Mexico, Elizabeth Wing's (1978) analysis of four Formative period Gulf Coast sites indicates that dogs were the most abundant terrestrial animal recovered there and had been utilized as food (ibid.: 38–39).

That dogs apparently had ritual as well as nutritional importance is suggested by the presence of two dog burials, one within a Barranca phase trash pit on T-25 and the other the sole animal among the human burials in the patio area of the T-25 altar. A third dog burial was uncovered in association with the house structures on T-9A. Other animals of apparent ritual importance are represented by the Amate phase bird burials (bird and dog burials were also recovered from Early Formative contexts at Nexpa, Morelos; Grove 1974b:42), and two small collared peccary burials on T-9A. Our turtle carapaces are small and fragmentary, and it is possible to ascertain whether they were used ritually or whether their original inhabitants were exploited for their meat, or both.

Strontium analysis of the human burials at the site (Schoeninger 1979a; 1979b) indicates the possibility that the persons buried in specific elite areas of the site (particularly the Plaza Central) had had greater access to meat resources during their lifetimes than the site's non-elite inhabitants. Since the majority of the burials studied for strontium content came from subfloor areas of various structures, we can compare those results with our faunal data.

Figures J.1 and J.2 show the relative quantities of the economically important deer, dog, and rabbit bone by structure for the Barranca and Cantera phases. These data reveal that every house structure yielded faunal remains, suggesting that everyone had access to meat. Some non-elite structures have much more faunal material than the elite structures. These findings do not agree with the results of the strontium analysis. However, the validity of these data are questioned, since the sample from each house unit and from the site as a whole is extremely small.

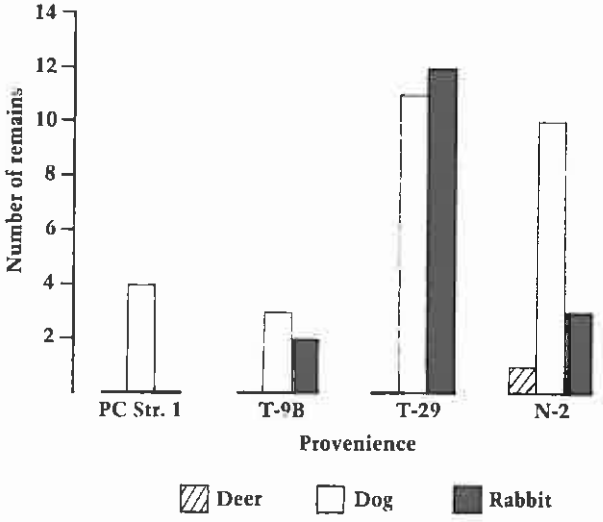

Figure J.1. Distribution of faunal remains for the Barranca phase.

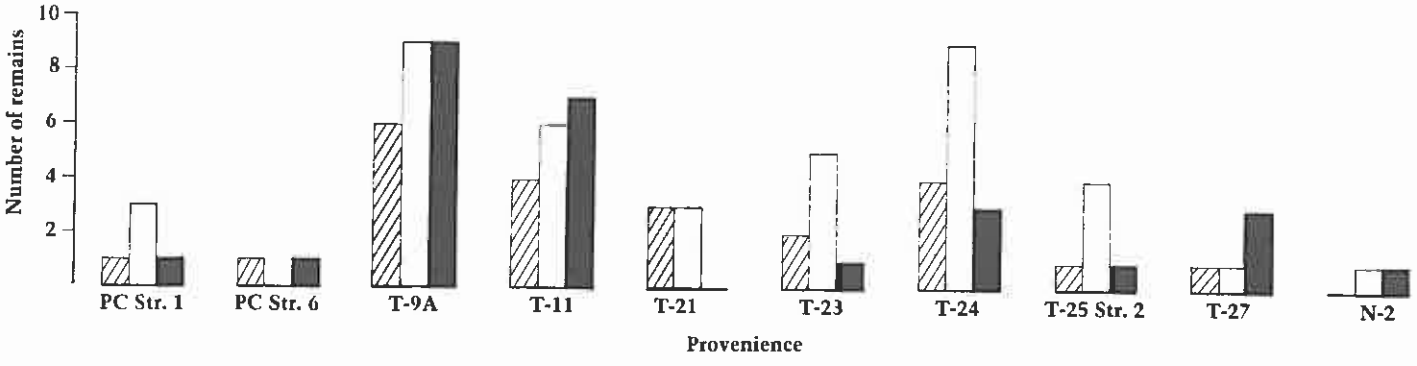

Figure J.2. Distribution of faunal remains for the Cantera phase.