

Revisiting Torralba: old questions that generate more questions

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Torralba (Torralba del Moral, Spain) is an archaeological key in the reconstruction and understanding of the evolution and development of Palaeoanthropology. The excavations carried out for the marques de Cerralbo, and later by L. Freeman and F.C. Howell converted this archaeological site as the paradigm to relate the behavior of archaic hominids. Torralba typified and facilitated the existence of the hunting of big herbivores. In this sense, elephants were regular prey for the human groups of the Middle Pleistocene.

During the 80's this proposal was difficultly criticized by different authors. Among other arguments, these critics coincided in pointing out that the absence of specific contextual observations. These reservations prevented the evaluation and verification concerning the role

developed by the human activity in the site formation. These seriously affected the role played by the human groups in the hunting of elephants

In this presentation we want to expose some elements of reflection obtained after the excavations carried out between 1994 and 1999. These observations suggest that Torralba is a deposit with a complex sedimentary and taphonomic history that limit the possibility to validate the classic explanation. These suggestions show that the archaeo-paleontological potential in Torralba is quite unknown; and at the same time, the determination of the human activity in the site formation and the possible interaction between elephants and human groups is equally difficult of evaluating.