

Title Elucidating post-harvest practices involved in the processing of algarrobo (*Prosopis* spp.) for food at El Shincal Inka site (Northwest Argentina): an experimental approach based on charred remains

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Abstract

It is known from previous studies that qualitative and quantitative morphological attributes of food products and residues may permit the identification of different food processing activities in desiccated *algarrobo* (*Prosopis chilensis* and *Prosopis flexuosa*) remains. Experimental approaches are used here in order to (1) evaluate if those diagnostic features persist even after charring and (2) to use these results as a means of interpreting types of processing from archaeobotanical contexts of the Inka site of El Shincal. Experimentation was made on the basis of traditional practices which were registered during previous ethnobotanical work in the area. Diagnostic patterns of *Prosopis* flours and *patay* (bread), as well as of *añapa/aloja* (fresh and alcoholic beverages, respectively) and *arrope* (syrup) residues were stipulated for charred remains. In the specific case of El Shincal, specimens derived from flour manufacture (unrefined and refined) and *añapa/aloja* residues were recognized from different buildings. This must have implied a special organization of the production and the people working on that, in the sense of post-harvest intensification.

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