Methodology of Zoo-archaeology

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In Japan, there has been no plain literature on the methodology of zoo-archaeology. For this reason, the author attempts to describe methods of zoo-archaeology, and some hints thereon for students who are about to learn the identification of faunal remains.

First of all, the author describes how to prepare skeletal specimens, which are essential materials for bone identification; then describes methods for identification of parts, species, sex and age as well as specific features to be observed, including the size, diseases, damage to, or cut marks of the bone.

In the following section, the author states upon the method of data description required for the writing of reports; for example, the left or right part of the bone, and the location of fragment of the bone.

Finally, the author points out that the methods of bone collection and identification exert a great influence on the result of analysis.

The “tool” necessary for the bone identification is the skeletal specimens. At the same time, it is important to understand growing process of the bone, from its birth to maturity, and aging. Lack of, or inappropriate knowledge of that process may lead to mistakes in identification.

In carrying out zoo-archaeological studies, cooperation not only among zoo-archaeologists but also with archaeologists of other fields, is indispensable.