

The Bioanthropological Evidence of a ca. 10,000 CALYBP Ten-Individual Group in Central Patagonia

**PART
1**

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Despite the general consensus for a human arrival in South America prior to 13,000 CALYBP (Goebel et al. 2008), bone remains of these groups are particularly absent from the archaeological record (Dillehay 2009). This is especially the case for Patagonia, where the burial pattern supposedly associated with the earliest settlers was dated to no earlier than ca. 4400 CALYBP in Cerro Sota and Lago Sofia 1 (Borrero 2008). Most sites in Patagonia yielding human remains do not predate the middle Holocene, and those older either lack direct radiocarbon ages on human bones, as in the case of Epuayán Grande cave (Crivelli et al. 1996), or have questionable dates, as in Pali Aike (Neves et al. 1999). At the Baño Nuevo 1 site (Figure 1), a cave located in the westernmost steppes of central Patagonia (45° 16' S, Aisén, Chile), excavations recovered several funerary features in a high-resolution dated stratigraphic context (Mena and Reyes 2001; Mena and Stafford 2006; Mena et al. 2003). Baño Nuevo 1 is characterized by low humidity and stable temperature, favorable conditions for preserving a wide variety of material and organic remains, including the bones of 10 individuals dated at 10,200–9700 CALYBP.

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