This research summarizes the first results of the analysis of plant macroremains from five archaeological sites in the Basque region, one from the Early Iron Age and four from the late Iron Age. The Basque area includes two regions divided by the watershed: the Atlantic to the north where the sites of Bolunburu and Basagain locate and the Mediterranean to the south where we can find La Hoya, Alto de Castejón and La Atalaya. The Atlantic area by the coast has an oceanic mild and very wet climate with a vegetation dominated by deciduous mixed forests whereas the Mediterranean one has got summer drought and a vegetation where evergreen oaks are abundant.

**INTRODUCTION**

Sampling strategies and the type of contexts analysed have been diverse. 4 domestic contexts have been identified in Bolunburu, and in Basagain 67 samples have been analysed, most of them from one single habitation area. Samples from La Hoya come from 4 domestic contexts from Level 3. In Alto de Castejón, 3 contexts have been analyzed but 99% of the remains come from unit 3052. The only sample from La Atalaya comes from a pit-silo (UE 131). Although more contexts have been studied, most samples with results correspond to concentrations of plant macroremains.

All samples have been processed through a Syrfat-type flotation machine (250 µm for the slot and 1 mm for the residue) with the exception of La Hoya where concentrations were collected in situ during the excavation carried out between 1973-1989. In Bolunburu and Basagain all remains were analyzed. In La Hoya, Alto de Castejón and La Atalaya samples were very big and 100 cc for each were selected with a riffle box. Plant identification was conducted at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) based on morphology and by comparison with modern and bibliographic material.

**RESULTS**

Cereal farming in the Basque Country during the Iron Age shows diversity. Analyses point out that hulled and free-threshing wheats together with foxtail millet and barley are the main crops. There is a significant difference between results from the new sites in the oceanic coastal fringe (Bolunburu and Basagain) with mild and humid conditions, and the sites in the Upper Ebro Valley under a Mediterranean climate (La Hoya, Alto de Castejón, La Atalaya). This suggests significant differences in farming systems which might be related to different ecological settings, the uses given to the crops and the management of animal husbandry.

**FREE-THRESHING WHEATS (T. aestivum/T. durum)** are the main crops in sites from the Ebro Valley; they are not abundant in the Atlantic area. The presence of **hulled wheats** (T. monococcum/T. dicoccum/c. T. spelta) is quite constant in all sites (10-25% of all the caryopseis identified); in the Atlantic fringe they outnumber naked wheats.

According to grain number, **foxtail millet** (Setaria italica) is the main crop in the coastal fringe (it was also identified in Intxur, Cubero 1996). Foxtail millet is absent in sites from the Ebro valley although broomcorn millet ( Panicum miliaceum) was identified in Alto de la Cruz (Hopf, 1979, Cubero, 1991).

On the contrary to other regions in the Iberian Peninsula (Pérez-Jordà et al. 2007), the presence of barley (Hordeum vulgare) in our sites is <10%. This low presence, which seems clear by the coast, will have to be confirmed for the Ebro Valley because barley was the main crop in El Castillar and in Los Castros de Lastra (Cubero, 1993, 1994).

No evidence of arboriculture has been found. Although it is not the focus of this work, **wild gathered plants** have also been identified in these sites. Acorns in particular are very abundant and may have been a very important food resource during the Iron Age in the Basque region.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**