

Peer Review

Review of: "Does Palaeolithic Resource Management Leading to Domestication Explain Human “Modernity”?”

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The research topic, investigating links between evidence of human behaviour and domestication, has potential. Where the case studies focus on animals, examples from plants and possibly fungi might create a richer ground for discussion (see the work of authors such as Tim Denham, Dorian Fuller, and Nicole Boivin).

The structure of the paper needs significant work. Organising information with sub-headings and providing clear sign-posting would be useful for the reader. I suggest a short introduction that provides a framing, followed by background/literature that can be used to set up the case studies.

There are a number of terms and assumptions that require more attention. For example, how do we draw the line between artificial selection and non-artificial selection? How do we determine intentionality relating to domestication?

Regarding archaeology, some ideas are asserted as fact where a far more cautious approach is advised. The surplus energy obtained from intensified food production being responsible for durable shelters, figurative art, writing, and science, is specious reasoning from an archaeological perspective. It is fairer to say that there are positive (reinforcing) feedbacks between intensification and social dynamics that led to a number of changes in social organisation, some of which led to various forms of specialisation. Outcomes of intensive food production (and associated domestication) have not been uniform.

It is not immediately clear what statement is being made about human “modernity”. This requires far more explanation in the introduction and a clear stance from the authors. My understanding of anatomical modernity is that it is poorly evidenced scientific racism. The authors appear to be providing

a critique, but it is not entirely clear as timelines of human development/change are asserted in a number of cases without critique.

The case studies are currently superficial in terms of research and are not adequate for addressing lofty questions relating to the dynamics of human/non-human domestication.

It is good to see that taphonomy is raised, but this section needs to be developed beyond a long definition to a more developed argument relating to the question.

There are the seeds of some good ideas in this paper, but I recommend a thorough reorganisation, a clear and well sign-posted structure, and more extensive research.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.