

Peer Review

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

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This manuscript offers a wide-ranging and stimulating discussion of domestication processes across different animal taxa. It convincingly argues that domestication trajectories were neither uniform nor linear, but highly variable, gradual, and regionally contingent. The emphasis on species-specific constraints, differing degrees of human control, and the long-term complexity of domestication is appropriate and well supported. The case of reindeer, as a form of partial and context-dependent domestication in the circumpolar region, is particularly instructive and effectively illustrates the author's main argument.

I find the discussion of taphonomic logic especially valuable. The observation that early stages of animal management and pre-domestication practices are unlikely to leave clear archaeological signatures, and therefore must have begun much earlier than their first detectable evidence, is persuasive. This reasoning is broadly applicable to many transformative processes in human history and is well illustrated in the manuscript.

That said, the argument could be strengthened by considering additional categories of archaeological evidence that may complement the absence of direct taphonomic or zooarchaeological signals. In particular, the manuscript does not engage with large-scale mass-hunting events involving ungulates (e.g., large bovids, gazelles, goats), which become increasingly common toward the end of the Palaeolithic and persist into the Neolithic in many regions. From some perspectives, such practices could be interpreted as precursors to later domestication processes or, at the very least, as forms of intensified human–animal management. Importantly, evidence for these practices is not always derived from faunal assemblages alone. Rock art (for example, Mesolithic Levantine scenes depicting caprine hunting in the Iberian Peninsula) and large built structures such as desert kites in the Near and Middle East provide

independent lines of evidence for coordinated, large-scale exploitation of animal populations. Even if these practices were not directly connected to subsequent domestication, their economic, social, and organisational implications are substantial and relevant to the manuscript's broader framework.

Finally, while the concept of "modernity" features prominently in the title, it is not explicitly defined or discussed in the text. Given the conceptual weight of this term in debates on human evolution, the manuscript would benefit from a clearer clarification of what is meant by "human modernity" in this context, or at least from a brief discussion of how the concept is being used by the author.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.