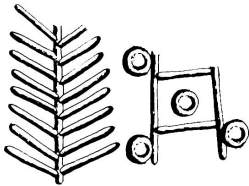


# Introduction

## Domesticity Expressed



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Home and family are central to the human experience. We know little about the origins of this basic social organization for humans and the development of what we know today as domesticity. Domesticity has a very long past but archaeological evidence is missing for most of the millennia. Archaeological levels in caves represent such complex palimpsests that they cannot be used to reconstruct the spatial aspect of social life. The few huts in the Ukrainian plain during the late Middle Palaeolithic, the Pavlovian mammoth “dwellings” in the Ukrainian plain and in Moravia during the Early Upper Palaeolithic, repeatedly reoccupied, do not let us understand how domestic life was organized.<sup>1</sup>

It is rightfully in archaeology that we must search for evidence of this; that evidence must be material in nature. The most evident archaeological remain is the hearth, which plays a universal role in traditional societies. There are close relationships among household, home, and hearth. It is so fundamental that in French, the same word *foyer* (hearth) is used for speaking about the central domestic fireplace, the household, and the “house as home.” It is still used in this broad meaning, in particular in the expressions *foyer conjugal*, a married couple’s home.

### WHAT IS DOMESTICITY?

Domesticity can be defined as the processes that make up the creation and sustaining of the household. Whether there is an extended or a nuclear family, a household has functional and spatial constraints. It must provide space for sleeping, storage, food preparation, cooking, and eating, education and play facilities for children, an area for gathering, and

<sup>1</sup>An open air settlement under current excavation at Zaraysk, in Russia, may change this situation.

everyday craft activities such as making clothing. Spatially, it has contiguity and clearly has boundaries that separate the areas controlled by one family group from the areas controlled by another (see Kooyman 2006). Economically, it is both a productive and consuming unit. Socially the household is a physical representation of related kin. Psychologically a household enforces solidarity ties and creates the emotional conditions that characterize homes. It would appear that hearth always plays a central role in households. Another major element is food: finding from the faunal remains who controls its acquisition, its processing, its stocking or cooking, and where tells a lot about the gender relations within the household (Hastorf 1991). Where the cooking takes place: at the main hearth of the domestic space or at an outside auxiliary hearth, may tell something about the social status of the cook versus the people sitting around the main hearth.

### DOMESTICITY OF HUNTERS-GATHERERS

There are several parameters that give mobile hunters and gatherers a modified form of domesticity: They have a different perception of territory and of household boundaries than do their later Neolithic descendants. Although the nuclear family is the basic cell, a household enlarges and restricts its size according to the food resources as is suggested by the ethnographic structural model of Gearing et al. (1958). This may follow the seasons or the current availability in food or be dependent upon ritual or other calendars. When a hunter-gatherer residence is organized within to a logistical system with a base camp, hunting camps and stands, extraction settlements, etc., only the base camp will express domesticity since the others will reflect only a segment of the social group, namely, producers (Binford 1980, 2001).

In comparison to sedentary populations, mobile hunters-gatherers have a different pattern of storage and cleaning in the base camp. Storage is more processed so that it may be containerized in smaller and lighter packages providing greater ease of transport. In terms of cleaning, there will be a relation between the duration of the occupation and the intensity of the cleaning. As noted above, hearths play an important role that is independent of climate. Whether it is hot, cold, or temperate—most mobile hunter-gatherers will create hearths. Indeed, each society seems to have a vernacular form of architecture based upon cultural convention, which provides similar forms, while changes in climate will cause limited variation around these norms.

The late Magdalenian sites of the Paris Basin offer a unique opportunity for unraveling domesticity not only because they are very well preserved camps of short duration but also because the excavation methods have aimed at recovering the spatial information needed. Among them, Verberie stands out because of the large number of tools. The absence of patina on flint artifacts allows identification of the function of tools and the material on which they worked. This is of a great help for identifying tasks and getting more precise pieces of information on spatial distributions. However, in opposition to Eskimo tool kits, there are no obvious reasons to believe that tool kits are as strictly engendered in Magdalenian societies. For example, when looking at refitted cores at Verberie, we find that different types of tools can be extracted from a same core: a scraper, a micro-perçoir, and a burin

come from a core knapped in a simplified way. In another case, a series of four borers come from the same core. Last, an outstanding knapping sequence results in producing blades that are kept as blanks for a future use and may be shared among the different members of the group (Audouze et al. 1981). This does not mean that a division of labor based upon gender does not exist or that the spatial organization of camps does not reflect it but that it has to be brought to light by the analysis.

Looking for domesticity implies several investigation steps: defining the domestic space and its components, identifying specialized activities areas if they exist, then looking for the agents who have created these areas. Is space divided according to gender? to age classes? Is it possible to identify children's activities? We already know that lithic tools do not reflect the total diversity of activities undertaken at the camps. Which ones can be deduced from other evidence? Is it possible to identify a division of labor according to gender? Have symbolic activities left any traces? These are the questions that arise when considering domesticity.

We need to examine both the intra- and the interhousehold spaces (Lawrence 1990: 78). Are there regularities, hierarchies, or other typologies of hearths? This is a difficult question because of the multifunctionality of hearths. They may be domestic hearths that are the gathering place of the family or economic hearths that are the focus of specialized productions. Is the polyvalence of domestic hearths the result of environmental conditions and thus related to the scarcity of fuel or a social result of the affirmation of the hearth as a gathering place? One needs to give particular attention to the conceptual boundaries, their material expressions, to transition spaces and their clearly demarcated or fuzzy thresholds (Lawrence: 77).

### WHY IS DOMESTICITY IMPORTANT?

That is because it is the basic component of society. Although it is possible to have individual production and consumption, the household is the place where shared production and shared consumption originate. And thus it is also the place where redistribution begins. Furthermore, the household is where multigenerational economic, social, and educational interactions start. Domesticity started, of course, much earlier but its archaeological traces are elusive. Because the household is multigenerational, it has a temporal component. That means individuals relate to both past and future generations. It is the basic cell of tradition transmission. Therefore in some cases, it reifies style. Conversely, when tradition changes, we observe that it disrupts society, family organization, and thus households (as we can see when the Mesolithic occurs). Because the household operates as a place for savings and investment, it provides and increases resilience to a disruptive environment. When hazards destroy or partially destroy a household, the domesticity processes allow the family cell to recombine onto another. Analyzing domesticity and households in prehistoric societies may be the first step and may be the only path to reconstructing Upper Palaeolithic social organization.

We don't really know when family life starts (when both parents remain and look after their progeny until they are self-sufficient, or when it becomes a multigenerational unit). Prior to the Gravettian, the material representation of the household has no clear a priori

spatial organization. The presence of a lithic workshop is not an indication of an organized space inasmuch as it is an a posteriori result of a technical operation. Such workshops exist since Acheulean or even earlier. The few Mousterian living floors that could be analyzed do not show sufficiently organized space to identify domestic characteristics (cf. the Mousterian open air sites excavated by C. Farizy at Mauran [1994] and Champlost [1988] or the Chatelperronian hut dug by Leroi-Gourhan at the grotte du Renne at Arcy-sur-Cure).

By the Pavlovian and Gravettian, they begin to have clear household features with organized spaces as the mammoth dwellings in Moravia and Ukrain or as the semi-excavated houses of Villerest (Bracco coord. 2005). By the Magdalenian, the Paris Basin offers a series of sites quite representative of what could be households of the time and the domestic processes that created them. In fact, one can show that they are contrasting and a priori alternative processes in different contemporaneous sites. Magdalenian is an extensive cultural tradition that extends from Northwest Spain to the Netherlands and Southern and Central Germany and Western Switzerland. It replaces Solutrean at the end of the Pleniglacial period and extends over the cold Early Dryas, the cool temperate Bölling, the colder Middle Dryas and the beginning of the temperate Alleröd, between the sixteenth millennium and the thirteenth millennium B.P. The Paris Basin sites belong to the late Magdalenian phase and date between the end of the fourteenth millennium and the middle of the thirteenth millennium B.P. (in calibrated 14C dates). These are open air sites mostly located on valley bottoms that have been very well preserved by gentle floods. Faunal remains, features such as hearths and spatial organization have been preserved in seven of them. Although the Magdalenian tradition is localized in time and space and restricted to Western Europe during three millennia, it shares similar cultural adaptive traits with many reindeer hunters-gatherers and more widely with hunters-gathers preying on large herbivorous game in the tundra, boreal forest, and park grasslands.

## TWO COMPLEMENTARY APPROACHES

We develop here two combined approaches: one is based on the analyses of empirical data that are cross-referenced and spatialized to produce new results. The other is to take from other fields analogies and methodologies, models and simulations, as well as comparative data to be used to interpret the archaeological record. We use comparative data for four different studies. One shows how in spite of cultural differences, reindeer butchering always respects certain rules that derive from the necessity to recover every eatable or usable part of the animal, to avoid their decay and to ensure their eventual preservation. Second, we examine cross-cultural regularities in the ethnographic record (such as the comparative study of hide working by Keeley) and cross-cultural technical regularities that relate gestures to use wear on hide-working scrapers (see Beyries and Rots this volume). Third, we look at the comparative impact of textiles technology on society (Soffer).

By examination of faunal and lithic remains and by reconstructing the chaînes opératoires one is able to identify the production system, including hunting tactics, and then go on to identifying the actors. More specifically, we can begin by (1) recognizing which tactics were used to hunt reindeer, and (2) identifying different levels of competence

among knappers, particularly unskilled knappers lacking know-how and psychomotor control, thus identifying children. In this way they provide an entry to the Magdalenian demography.

This book consists of the analyses of five Magdalenian sites, one later Azilian site, a regional comparison, and a set of comparative specialized technology studies. Together they represent a new way to consider the processes by which domesticity formed the household and social and spatial restraints created organized material representations in the prehistoric record.

This book uses the site of Verberie as a central focus with a series of several nearby sites and a set of regional comparisons. The advantage of Verberie is the very large database of tools, lithics, fauna, and micro-wear analyses. The site has been excavated continuously for 26 years under the same director so that there is a rare standardization and consistency in the data that can be matched by few other Upper Palaeolithic sites. At Verberie new results on fauna (Enloe this volume), flint tool production, intensive micro-wear analysis, and a study of hearths give a broader insight on the hunting and processing of game, as well as on the function of tools and the activities performed at the site (Beyries et al. 2005; Janny et al. 2007; Averbouh, Janny, Dumarçais, and Caron, this volume). This permits a detailed spatial analysis (Audouze this volume) using GIS methods (Keeler this volume) and casts light upon the social organization in Magdalenian settlements.

The group of late Magdalenian sites selected for the spatial analysis of domesticity present characteristics that are seldom found in other prehistoric sites. They belong to the same cultural tradition and share common traits in the procurement and subsistence strategies as well as in the organization of activities and space. Domestic hearths play a central role in each of them. They also exhibit an adaptive variability resulting from differences in seasonality, hunting strategies and game, duration of occupation, and number of households. This variability may be observed between sites but also between levels within the same site testifying to a local evolution through time. Three of the sites, Verberie, Pincevent, and Etiolles, are located in the valley bottoms of the Seine and the Oise rivers in the Paris Basin, France. Two other ones, Champréveyres and Monruz, are located along the lake of Neuchâtel in western Switzerland. Another site in the bottom of the Seine Valley introduces more time depth with its Azilian living floors. In spite of some discrepancies in  $^{14}\text{C}$  dating (Leesch and Bullinger 2006) due mostly to the  $^{14}\text{C}$  plateau of the thirteenth millennium, they are all dated within the early and middle Dryas and Bölling (between the fourteenth and thirteenth millennium B.P.). A last site, Le Closeau, located in the Seine river valley, belongs to the following cultural tradition, Azilian, and is dated in the thirteenth millennium. Its living floors exhibit quite a different spatial organization reflecting another organization of the domestic and life space.

Several levels of Pincevent and Etiolles have already been published (Leroi-Gourhan and Brézillon 1966; Leroi-Gourhan and Brézillon 1972; Julien 2006; Pigeot 1990, 2004; Olive 2005) but the recent publication of another level for each of these two sites bring important new insights (Julien 2006; Bodu et al. 2006; Pigeot 2004) about seasonality, procurement strategy, and activities in relation to the settlement duration. Several remarkable volumes have been published on Champréveyres (Leesch 1997; Cattin 2002) and the first

volume on the Magdalenian site of Monruz just appeared in 2006 (Bullinger et al. 2006). Drawing on these new results the papers in this volume focus on the organization of social activities.

We begin with a discussion of domesticity and demographics among hunters-gatherers, followed by a consideration how those might be seen in archaeological spatial patterning.

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