



Household Chores and Household Choices: Theorizing the Domestic Sphere in Historical Archaeology

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Presents a variety of archaeological case studies on daily life in a wide range of locations and circumstances.

Because archaeology seeks to understand past societies, the concepts of "home," "house," and "household" are important. Yet they can be the most elusive of ideas. Are they the space occupied by a nuclear family or by an extended one? Is it a built structure or the sum of its contents? Is it a shelter against the elements, a gendered space, or an ephemeral place tied to emotion? We somehow believe that the household is a basic unit of culture but have failed to develop a theory for understanding the diversity of households in the historic (and prehistoric) periods.

In an effort to clarify these questions, this volume examines a broad range of households—a Spanish colonial rancho along the Rio Grande, Andrew Jackson's Hermitage in Tennessee, plantations in South Carolina and the Bahamas, a Colorado coal camp, a frontier Arkansas farm, a Freedman's Town eventually swallowed by Dallas, and plantations across the South—to define and theorize domestic space. The essays devolve from many disciplines, but all approach households from an archaeological perspective, looking at landscape analysis, excavations, reanalyzed collections, or archival records. Together, the essays present a body of knowledge that takes the identification, analysis, and interpretation of households far beyond current conceptions.

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