Violence and the Sacred in the Ancient Near East

Girardian Conversations at Çatalhöyük

Edited by Ian Hodder

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This volume brings together two groups engaged with understanding the relationships between religion and violence. The first group consists of scholars of the mimetic theory of René Girard, for whom human violence is rooted in the rivalry that stems from imitation. To manage this violence of all against all, humans often turn to violence against one, the scapegoat, thereafter incorporated into ritual. The second group consists of archaeologists working at the Neolithic sites of Çatalhöyük and Göbekli Tepe in Turkey. At both sites there is evidence of religious practices that center on wild animals, often large and dangerous in form. Is it possible that these wild animals were ritually killed in the ways suggested by Girardian theorists? Were violence and the sacred intimately entwined and were these the processes that made possible and even stimulated the origins of farming in the ancient Near East? In this volume, Ian Hodder and a team of contributors seek to answer these questions by linking theory and data in exciting new ways.

Ian Hodder is Dunlevie Family Professor of Archaeology at Stanford University. A Fellow of the British Academy, he has received numerous awards for his accomplishments, including the Oscar Montelius Medal from the Swedish Society of Antiquaries, the Huxley Memorial Medal by the Royal Anthropological Institute, the Fyssen International Prize, and the Gold Medal by the Archaeological Institute of America, along with honorary doctorates from the universities of Bristol and Leiden. Hodder is the author of numerous books, including *Symbols in Action, Reading the Past* and *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things*.

Bull and figures from north wall of James Mellaart's "Shrine F.V.1," transcribed by Miss Raymonde Enderlé Ludovici. Permission: Alan Mellaart.

Pair of "leopards" from west wall of James Mellaart's "Shrine VII.44." Permission: Alan Mellaart.

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Edited By
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Contents

Figures

Tables

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Preface

The process that resulted in this book began in 2007 at Stanford. At that time the Çatalhöyük Research Project (excavating the 9,000-year-old site of Çatalhöyük in central Turkey – see Hodder 2006) was seeking novel ways of integrating wider debates into the research process. As part of that endeavour, groups of cultural and social anthropologists, philosophers, theologians and religious scholars were brought to the site during the excavation season each year to discuss the interpretations of the site. The aim was to bring major thinkers in these fields into a dialogue with the archaeologists and archaeological data at the site. The result has been a series of volumes that deal with the role of religion in early farming societies in the Middle East and Anatolia (Hodder 2010, 2014, 2018).

At times it was not possible to bring all the interdisciplinary scholars to the site and over the weekend of 14–15 October 2006 a meeting took place in the seminar room of the Archaeology Center at Stanford. The meeting was funded by the Templeton Foundation as part of a project entitled 'Spirituality and Religious Ritual in the Emergence of Civilization: Çatalhöyük as a Case Study'. One of the participants was René Girard who had been invited because of his work on the intersections between the sacred and violence (Girard 1972), given the apparent evidence for violent imagery at Çatalhöyük. While most of the discussants presented initial thoughts and asked preliminary questions, Girard rather took the group aback by presenting a fully worked through and thorough analysis of the symbolism from the site. It is a version of this paper that was later presented at UC Riverside in 2008 (published in Antonello and Gifford 2015).

In 2008, thanks to the help of Peter Thiel, the financier of PayPal and Facebook, and a former student of Girard's, a foundation named Imitatio was set up to foster the dissemination and discussion of Girard's theory. Given Girard's interest in Çatalhöyük, in 2012 Jean-Pierre Dupuy, a member of the Imitatio Board, wrote to Hodder suggesting a meeting.

So began a series of conversations and on 1–4 July2013 the group met at Çatalhöyük for the first time. As a result of this meeting it was decided to work together as a group and move towards writing a volume. The idea was to discuss the application of Girard's ideas to Çatalhöyük and to the early development of settled life in the Middle East. The group came together at Çatalhöyük again in the summer of 2014. Because of the group's interest in violence and sacrifice there were intense discussions with the human remains team at the site, especially with Chris Knüsel. The seminar at Çatalhöyük was followed by a visit to Göbekli Tepe where the group was shown round by Lee Clare who agreed to join the book-writing project. The group again met in Paris on 3 June 2015 to discuss the first drafts of the chapters presented here, followed by a meeting in San Francisco on 14–15 January 2016.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

1

Setting the Archaeological Scene

Ian Hodder

Introduction

This volume is the result of two realms of endeavor suddenly and contingently coming together to explore what each can do for the other. On the one hand, some archaeologists of early settled societies in the Middle East had come to realize that the old perspective of Neolithic societies as dominated by notions of fertility and mother goddesses needed to come to terms with the evidence for imagery that emphasized wild and dangerous and often male animals (Hodder and Meskell 2011; Schmidt 2006). Why was it that the formation of settled village life from the tenth millennium BC onwards in the Middle East was often associated with images of animals with their teeth bared and their ribs showing as at Göbekli Tepe? What was the relationship between violence and settled life? And why was it that 2,000–3,000 years later at the large mega-site of Çatalhöyük, the imagery again emphasized violence as in the claws, tusks, horns, and beaks set in walls, the reliefs of leopards facing each other, and the rituals in which large bulls were teased and killed and feasted upon?

On the other hand, followers of the late philosopher René Girard were seeking realms in which they could apply his ideas. Girardian theories are explained in detail in Chapter 2 in this volume, and throughout the other chapters, but in general terms they deal with the relationship between violence and the sacred. According to Girard's mimetic theory, the process of mimesis whereby humans desire the same things as each other leads to violence that can easily break out into violence of all against all. This type of rampant violence can be resolved by the participants turning against one – the scapegoat. The latter may then take on a sanctified

position as the one that brought peace to society, and through time the sacrifice of the scapegoat is repeated and re-enacted in ritual in order to sustain peaceful order. So here is a theory in search of examples in order to pursue a generality. Because the theory links ritual violence to social order, it seems ideally suited to explain the evidence from sites such as Göbekli Tepe and Çatalhöyük. Could the killing of wild bulls at Çatalhöyük be seen as a re-enactment of the killing of a sacrificial victim? Of Çatalhöyük, Girard (2015, 223) wrote, "I believe that these paintings, and the whole Çatalhöyük settlement, are an enormous discovery from the point of view of the mimetic theory."

This volume is the result of the bringing together of these two areas of interest through a series of chance and then intense interactions and conversations as described in the Preface. In this chapter I will explore what mimetic theory can contribute to debate in archaeology, as well as examine some of the difficulties that arise from bringing Girardian ideas into dialogue with archaeological evidence. The chapters in this volume are by non-archaeologists (Chapters 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10) and by archaeologists (Chapters 1, 4, 5, and 11). The former are Giradian theorists drawn towards the fascination of Çatalhöyük and Göbekli Tepe. They have visited the two sites and spent many hours in discussion with the archaeological teams that work there. The latter are archaeologists interested in grappling with Girardian theories in relation to archaeology. The aim of the theorists is not to produce accomplished in-depth archaeological studies but to point to potentials and scope for further debate. The aim of the archaeologists is to respond to this stimulus from the point of view of a deeper familiarity with the Neolithic data. I aim to show in this first chapter and in Chapter 11 that indeed there is much potential for bringing the Neolithic archaeology of the Middle East into conversation with Girardian theories, as long as a critical stance is maintained. In order to do this, it is first necessary to describe Çatalhöyük as this was the context in which the conversations between Neolithic archaeologists and Girardian followers took place, as described in the Preface.

Çatalhöyük

Three previous volumes have explored the role of violence at Çatalhöyük (Hodder 2010, 2014c, 2018) and in the Neolithic of the Middle East more generally, including at Göbekli Tepe. The focus of this project, Çatalhöyük East (7100–6000 BC) in central Turkey, is one of the

best-known Neolithic sites in Anatolia and the Middle East, roughly contemporary with later Pre-Pottery and the following Pottery Neolithic in the Levant. It became well known because of its large size (34 acres and 3,500–8,000 people), with eighteen levels inhabited over 1,100 years and dense concentration of "art" in the form of wall paintings, wall reliefs, sculptures, and installations. Within Anatolia, and particularly within central Anatolia, recent research has shown that there are local sequences which lead up to and prefigure Çatalhöyük (Baird 2007; Gérard and Thissen 2002; Özdoğan 2002). In southeast Turkey, the earlier sites of Çayönü (Özdoğan and Özdoğan 1998) and Göbekli Tepe (Schmidt 2006) already show substantial agglomeration and elaborate symbolism. In central Anatolia, Aşıklı Höyük (Esin and Harmankaya 1999) has dense-packed housing through the millennium prior to Çatalhöyük. There are many other sites contemporary, or partly contemporary, with Çatalhöyük that are known in central Anatolia and the adjacent Burdur Lakes region (Duru 1999; Gérard and Thissen 2002). Yet Çatalhöyük retains a special significance because of the complex narrative nature of its art, and many syntheses (e.g. by Cauvin 1994 or Mithen 2003) give it a special place. Much of the symbolism of the earlier Neolithic and later (into historic times) periods of the Middle East can be "read" in terms of the evidence from Çatalhöyük and the rich evidence from the site enables interpretation of the evidence from other sites.

The site (Figure 1.1) was first excavated by James Mellaart (e.g. 1967) in the 1960s. After 1965 it was abandoned until a new project began in 1993 (Hodder 1996, 2000, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006, 2007, 2013a, 2013b, 2014a, 2014b). Through both projects, only 5 percent of the mound has been excavated, but the whole mound has been sampled using surface survey, surface pick-up, geophysical prospection, and surface scraping (see reports in Hodder 1996). The inhabitants cultivated domestic plants and sheep and goat. In the early levels they hunted wild cattle, aurochs, and other wild animals such as boar, deer, and equid, but domestic cattle had been introduced by the middle levels of occupation. More than two hundred houses have so far been excavated by Mellaart and the current project. The main architectural components of the site are densely clustered houses, with areas of refuse or midden between them. The art and symbolism and burials all occur within houses. There is evidence of productive activities in all houses, in midden areas, and on partial second stories. None of the sampling has found evidence of large public buildings, ceremonial centers, specialized areas of production, or cemeteries.

FIGURE 1.1 Overview of the contemporary excavations in the south area of Çatalhöyük.
Source: Jason Quinlan and Çatalhöyük Research Project.

Göbekli Tepe in southeastern Turkey is an earlier site, dating to the late tenth and ninth millennia BC, and to the Pre-Pottery A and B periods. Here the inhabitants depended on wild plants and animals. The site and its interpretation are described fully in Chapter 5 in this volume. Its relevance to the theme of this volume is that, as at the later site of Çatalhöyük, much of the visual imagery is of wild animals, often very male (with erect penises) and apparently violent in aspect (with bared teeth, claws, and horns prominent). The similarities between the imagery in the two sites have been discussed elsewhere (Hodder and Meskell 2011). The two earlier volumes discussing the violence of these scenes (Hodder 2010, 2014c) argued that violence can be associated with moments of transcendence. Violence could thus be seen as incorporated into rituals that established transcendent roles and rules in societies as they settled down and cultivated plants and animals.

Bloch (2008, 2010) sees most human societies as understanding that there is a permanent framework to social life that transcends the natural transformative processes of birth, growth, reproduction, ageing, and death. Violence and symbolic killing take people beyond process into permanent entities such as descent groups. By leaving this life, it is possible to see oneself and others as part of something permanent and life-transcending. For Bloch (1992, 2010), mastering the virility of wild bulls in rituals and depictions in the house "reanimated" the transcendental social and thus contributed to the continuity of the house. The moments of danger and/or violence involved movements away from

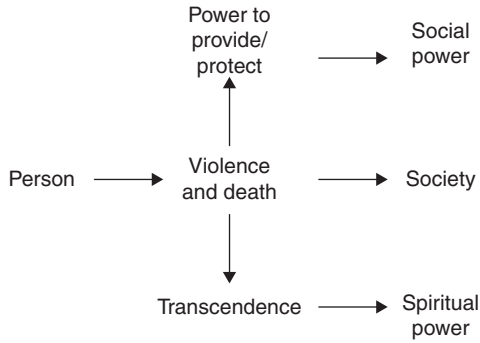

FIGURE 1.2 The role of violent imagery in social and religious processes at Çatalhöyük as discussed in a previous volume (Hodder 2010).
Source: the author.

the here-and-now; they involved transcendent experiences in which the social group could be transformed and made permanent. For Bloch there could indeed be a link between the violence in the imagery at Çatalhöyük and the lack of violence on human bodies. Social violence was dealt with by living within a symbolic, transcendent world of violence in which conflicts were resolved and social structures made permanent.

The view that the violent imagery at Çatalhöyük and other sites had a key role in creating the social and the long-term as people first settled down and formed complex societies is summarized in Figure 1.2. In this diagram, on the central horizontal axis, the person is made social through violence and death, either through initiation and other rituals or in the daily interactions with bull horns and other animal parts present or made absent in the house. In the lower part of the diagram, this social process is linked to the transcendental and the spiritual as persons experience something beyond themselves that is integral to their lives. Spiritual power is gained by individuals in these experiences, but also is controlled by elders or special houses. In the upper part of the diagram these spiritual powers are related to social powers. The social manipulation of rituals and symbols of violence give power to elders and special houses. There is also evidence that the power of wild animals was used to provide or protect. Thus in Building 77 the bull horns surround and protect the ancestors buried beneath the platform and in Building 1 wild goat horns were found over, perhaps protecting, a bin containing lentils (Hodder 2006).

Bloch offers a more general, sociological, and anthropological perspective that in many ways parallels the Girardian view, and yet it lacks the specificity, the spontaneous uncontrolled moments, and the generative mechanisms (see below) of the latter. Both describe general processes that are heightened at the dawn of sedentary and agricultural life. But it is Girard who emphasizes the ever-present raw violence that is embedded in the mimetic process. For him violence is far from symbolic; it churns away within the social process, continually generating change.

The Girardian view has to contend with archaeological and anthropological disciplines that have often wanted to "pacify the past." Allen (2014) describes a decades-long period in which anthropologists and archaeologists had downplayed the evidence for warfare in small-scale societies. Although this moratorium was brought to an end by a series of publications in the 1990s and onwards that demonstrated the importance of warfare amongst hunter-gatherers in the past and historic present, it is undoubtedly the case that Neolithic archaeology and the study of Neolithic human remains has continued with the notion of a "pacified past" until recently (see Knüsel et al., Chapter 4 this volume). In the case of the Neolithic in the Middle East and Europe an important influence on the notion of peaceful societies was the arguments made by Gimbutas (1974) and her followers that the Neolithic was a period in which women and the "Mother Goddess" were able to create non-violent societies, at least until the male-related violence asserted itself in the Late Neolithic and Chalcolithic and Bronze Age. Çatalhöyük in particular has been embroiled in this debate (Mellaart 1967; Meskell 1995).

While Allen describes the differences between those anthropologists and archaeologists who believe that warfare has always existed amongst humans and those who favor a short chronology (warfare only started with larger-scale, more complex societies), there is fairly widespread consensus that there has been "a long chronology of violence among hominins" (Allen 2014, 21), stretching back at least 5 million years. The small sample sizes and the very fragmented nature of much recovered human bone make it very difficult to evaluate the amount of trauma on Palaeolithic and Mesolithic European skeletal material, although for both periods there is evidence of interpersonal violence such as embedded projectiles and injuries to the cranium and lower arms. For Europe the evidence is summarized by Estabrook (2014; and see also Thorpe 2003). There is much evidence of interpersonal violence in the Epipalaeolithic and Neolithic in the Middle East, from Jebel Sahaba in Sudan (Wendorf

1968) to the "death pit" in the Late Neolithic at Domuztepe in southeast Turkey (Kansa et al. 2009).

While it may seem reasonable to argue that pressures on human societies as they became sedentary and invested in the ownership of houses, resources, tools, and prestige items led to increased interpersonal violence and warfare, there is little good evidence for such a change (Allen and Jones 2014). It is equally reasonable to argue that as human societies settled down and invested in longer-term relationships, networks, and roles, mechanisms were developed to manage potential increases in violence. The Girardian view is that one of these mechanisms was prohibition: the establishment of classifications and taboos that channeled desires in different directions and kept rivalries from getting out of hand. It is certainly a characteristic of Neolithic sites in the Middle East that they become increasingly structured, organized, and differentiated through time. But it is in fact the detailed evidence from Çatalhöyük that has showed most evidence for prohibitions and taboos. For example, I have discussed the contrast between the prevalence of imagery of leopards and the complete lack of leopard bones (except one claw) at the site in terms of a taboo against bringing leopard carcasses into the settlement (Hodder 2006). Very similar restrictions seem to have been applied to bears, and to a lesser degree to wild boars. There are other patterns that seem distinctive – for example, whole pots are never placed with bodies in graves, and neither are animals. Through most of the sequence of occupation, pots are not decorated but walls are. This latter pattern is linked to the main prohibition that dominates all the evidence from Çatalhöyük: it is the northern and eastern walls of houses that are preferentially painted and decorated, not the southern walls where the hearths and ovens occur and where pots are used and kept. There is an overall separation of the northern clean floors, under which there are adult burials, and the southern "dirty" floors, where most cooking and productive tasks took place (Hodder and Cessford 2004) and where only neonates and children were buried. All the ritual and symbolism so distinctive of Çatalhöyük is found in the northern parts of the main rooms. There are changes in floor height, kerbs between floor areas, different types of plaster used on the different floors; all this serves to separate activities and spaces. Movement around these buildings was highly controlled and restricted. Who could do what, where, and when was all carefully managed. It seems very likely that this complex web of positive rules and prohibitions created a society that was highly ordered, disciplined, regimented, all helping to limit conflict and violence.

But such preventive measures, prudent as they may have been, are inadequate in themselves. After all, why should individuals adhere to the prohibitions? There is no evidence at Çatalhöyük of a ruling elite that wielded force in order to establish rules and roles. It seems that older men and women were treated with special respect and had valued roles (Pearson and Meskell 2013), and there may well have been community-wide groups of elders who had particular influence. The members of the more elaborate houses which continued over longer generations and in which people were preferentially buried ("history houses" as defined by Hodder and Pels 2010; see also Hodder 2016) may have had special roles through their position in relation to ritual. But again, why did community members adhere to the restrictions advanced by these elders?

Perhaps elders and ritual leaders were able to mobilize sufficient resources to enforce the rules and restrictions, but it seems unlikely that force and policing would themselves have been sufficient in this largely egalitarian society. There were likely other ways in which taboos and restrictions were made manifest, justified, and normalized. It is here that the second mechanism identified by Girard comes to importance: the turning of violence of all against all to violence towards one emissary victim. Given that this mechanism is discussed fully in Chapter 2, my aim here is to explore how scapegoating and mimetic theories are attractive not only for Çatalhöyük and the origins of settled life in the Neolithic of the Middle East, but also for archaeological theory more generally.

A Productive New Perspective

In the above, I argued that it seems very attractive to interpret the symbolism of Çatalhöyük and Göbekli Tepe in Girardian terms. The images of wild animals and of mobs of humans "teasing and baiting" such animals seem readily interpretable in terms of rituals of sacrifice that lead to the resolution of conflicts within the community. In Part II in this volume, the main focus of the chapters is on the way mimesis, through rivalry, leads to violence and thence scapegoating as a solution. The chapters largely explore the evidence for intragroup violence at Çatalhöyük and nearby sites, and variously discuss this in relation to Girard's scapegoating model for archaic religion and society. The evidence tends to be either iconographic, based on the interpretation of wall paintings or relief sculptures, or osteological.

As Alison remarks in his Chapter 9, there are typically three "moments" to the Girardian model: mimesis, scapegoating, and subversion. Mimesis

lies at the core as described by Johnsen in Chapter 2, and the chapters in Part III in this volume focus more on the dynamism of the mimetic process as a whole and especially its value as a mechanism or theory for explaining long-term change. There is consideration of both issues of the emergence of sacrifice among sedentary populations and its relation to hunting in earlier hunter-gatherer societies, as well as its later subversion or sublation as archaic religion evolves into "modern" religion and sacrificial scapegoating transforms into sacrificial offering. In this section I wish to explore more widely ways in which a Girardian perspective on the mimetic process might be seen as productive for archaeological theory and debate.

An Alternative View of Cultural Transmission

Throughout its history, the discipline of archaeology has built its chronologies on the basis of the idea that humans copy each other. The assumption that styles of pottery or burial or house change gradually through time and over space is the main building block of archaeological method and theory. It allows material items from the past to be placed into groups that have spatial and temporal coherence. These styles, cultures, horizons have been the mainstay of archaeological research. Debates have centered on whether the styles or cultural groups identified by archaeologists were recognized by past actors, or they have focused on the question of whether "pots equal people" – whether the spread of pot types indicated the diffusion of ideas or the movements of people. More recently, archaeological study of the diffusion of styles has been reframed within neo-evolutionary, neo-Darwinian, and selectionist accounts that examine the transmission of traits (Shennan 2002). The lineages of styles through time are argued to be the product of cultural transmission, the handing down of information from generation to generation. Multiple forms of transmission are identified including indirect biased, guided variation, and drift. There is recognition of the emulative processes in which people copy successful or prestigious group members, and the study of emulation has long been a focus of social archaeology (e.g. Miller 1985).

In all these accounts, the copying of traits is seen as mechanical and unproblematic. There is little notion that humans often "invent traditions" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 2012) or that they actively manipulate cultural similarities and differences for their own ends. The Girardian view takes the mimetic process and draws out so much more from it. Copying an item of culture is seen as an imitating of another's desire, an appropriation. As a result, mimesis is no longer a passive process, benignly

facilitating the spread of information and cultural knowledge. Rather, it becomes a process in which tension and conflict are embedded. The social procedures by which humans learn from each other are themselves always already fraught.

Is it really the case that imitation always involves rivalry? After all, humans often copy each other in order to assert group membership. Within groups there is often a focus on sharing and on balanced reciprocity; it is between groups that negative reciprocity is predicted (Sahlins 1972). Making things or using or having things that are similar to the things of others might itself be a mechanism for enhancing group solidarity and restricting intragroup violence. Surely, imitation is the basis for group formation and cultural affiliation? From the Girardian point of view, this is indeed a pacified version of the past and of the cultural process, and it is contradicted by the widespread evidence (discussed above) for violence, both intra- and intergroup. From the Girardian view, if there is such peaceful mimesis, and if many hunter-gatherer societies see very little violence and warfare over long periods of time (Allen and Jones 2014), this is because outbreaks of violence have been countered through prohibitions and the sacrifice of emissary victims. For Girardians, it is logically the case that mimesis involves desire at some level, and thus it can be argued that desire for what is associated with others must tend towards rivalry.

Certainly by the time that humans are producing objects in which they invest labor, there may be incipient notions of association, identity, and ownership that emerge, even if that ownership remains far removed from what might be termed property. The earliest handaxes, the earliest pots and houses, already involved considerable care and investment, well before notions of property can be assumed (Woodburn 1998). At these early stages in human development there must have been some sense of permission being granted for mimesis to occur. Something is always taken away in the copying process (Taussig 1993; Weiner 1992). Copying others also assumes a certain access to resources, whether material or knowledge-based. There is thus always the potential for rivalry and conflict leading to violence regarding who can copy what. People may gain prestige by copying successful social actors, but the emulation tends to undermine the special status of the copied individual who has to continually re-invent in order to stay ahead (Miller 1985). Rivalry, then, does seem to be a logical component of mimesis, leading to the potential for violence. Cultural transmission and the diffusion of traits are thus transformed from passive benign processes into fraught moments

of negotiation. They become themselves generators of change, as will be further discussed below.

The diffusion and transmission of traits, important building blocks of archaeological research, thus become transformed into opportunities to explore mimesis and rivalry. When archaeologists recognize lineages of traits through time, styles, cultures, and horizons, they are not in fact studying the passive transfer of information; rather they are studying the ways in which particular interest groups manage the mimetic process. If a style endures, if traits persist, it is not because individuals have passively copied each other; neither is it because individuals have copied successful or prestigious individuals. Rather, it is because dominant individuals or groups have promoted or allowed the copying. The mimetic process has been managed in such a way as to permit or promote copying, to manage rivalry, to channel competition. The Girardian perspective opens up a fascinating and productive area of inquiry in which archaeologists explore the ways in which mimetic rivalry is produced and controlled.

An Alternative to Cognitive and Evolutionary Psychology Approaches

The Girardian view links this common archaeological concern with the transmission of traits with violence and religion. Girard does not see humans as genetically violent or genetically religious. Rather he sees both violence and religion as generated within the universal human practice of mimesis, a practice that leads to rivalry. Girard's theory aims to produce a non-deterministic, generative model for the dependence of ancient cultures on religion and sacrifice. In this way his approach differs from many cognitive and evolutionary psychology approaches in archaeology, which often seek to answer such questions as "when did humans become religious?" or "were humans always cooperative or were they originally violent?" In Chapter 3, Palaver discusses the ways in which violence surrounding death led to ritual. He does not see a cognitive revolution when humans started burying their dead in the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic. Rather he sees burial as a deeply practical and social matter of creating tangible signs and procedures that dealt with terror, fear, and accusation.

In his chapter in this volume, Dupuy (Chapter 10) offers a critique of rationalist cognitive approaches to religion. He challenges the notion (see also Asad 1982) that religion is about belief rather than activity, and he dismisses evolutionary approaches that are based on rational decision-making and game theory. Equally he dismisses the functionalist emphasis in cognitive archaeology whereby living together in social groups is seen

as needing a transcendent divine presence – so humans just invent one. The more detailed arguments in cognitive archaeology suggest that as groups increased in size, so there was a danger of free-riding and cheating; thus there had to be a commitment to cooperative behavior. But in fact there is little evidence in the Early Neolithic for violence. As we have seen, this suggests that violence was managed in some way.

These cognitive, functionalist, and evolutionary arguments are difficult in that religion appears as a "deus ex machina," somehow fully formed and set to manage violence. Perhaps more troubling is that an assumption is made that religion provides cohesion. In historic times and into our own era, religion is more clearly associated with division, inequality, and exploitation. By creating in-groups, religion also creates out-groups. There are immediately differences between those closer to and farther from the divine. In contrast to the cognitive and evolutionary perspectives, Dupuy argues for an understanding of religion in which "the sacred *contains* violence in the twofold sense of the verb 'to contain.' " In other words, the sacred does indeed manage and control violence, but it is also itself violent. "Good violence" of all against one (which generates peace and stability) stops the "bad violence" of all against all. The good contains the bad while being its opposite. There is a unity of opposites.

So for Dupuy, the very same mechanisms that are responsible for the self-institution and self-organization of human societies can always destroy them. One might argue that we have here arrived at a dialectical view. For Dupuy, the strength of Girard's anthropology (as well as psychology) is that it is deprived of any functionalism. The approach may appear dialectical, but not in the Hegelian way. It is not: thesis, antithesis, and the "Aufhebung" ("sublation") in a synthesis. The synthesis (self-exteriorized violence) and the antithesis (good violence) are one and the same. So Dupuy (2015) prefers to talk of tangled hierarchies or the structure of self-transcendence. But the important point is that from the Girardian view the mimetic process and the scapegoating mechanism generate change out of the unity of opposites.

A Generative Mechanism

At some levels it could be argued that the Girardian view is just a more detailed and more complex version of the idea very widely referenced in archaeology that religion functions to create group solidarity. This view is seen as particularly potent in the Neolithic, where the coming together of dispersed groups into permanent settlements is often described as made possible by the cohesive solidarities provided by religion. Clare

et al. (Chapter 5) argue that sacrifice "could have been used to promote intergroup solidarity and to mitigate intercommunity conflict."

Clare et al. take the view discussed at length by Dupuy (Chapter 10) that once communities reached a certain size (the Dunbar number), conflict would have to be mitigated, leading to the emergence of a religious response such as is found in the scapegoating/sacralizing process. The lack of evidence for between-group violence in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic (PPN) is seen as evidence for the efficacy of the religious response. At PPNA Körtik Tepe, however, there is much evidence of skeletal trauma that is interpreted in terms of within-group violence. The authors suggest that the small number of homicides evidenced from the site may indicate individuals who have become scapegoats. They suggest that the circles of stones at Göbekli Tepe were built at least partly to provide a setting for rituals that involved sacrifice and thus quelled conflict between rival communities. There are suggestions that the circles themselves may have been sacrificed, brought to an end, and buried.

Anspach (Chapter 6) suggests that "when the divisive violence of all-against-all gives way to the unifying violence of all-against-one, harmony is restored," even if he sees the reconciliation as unintended and unexpected. And yet in his account we see that while the production of peace is undoubtedly part of the Girardian story, the overall perspective is far from functionalist (see also Johnsen in Chapter 2). Anspach identifies contradictions. "On the one hand, the surrogate victim came from within the group; on the other hand, the collective violence transformed it into an apparently transcendent force guiding events from without." At Çatalhöyük the bull has been made domestic and "inside" by the time of the later levels in which the teasing and baiting scenes occur; earlier it was made "inside" by bringing the heads and horns into the domestic house. At the same time the bull is or has to be made wild and "outside" (see also Chapter 7 by Johnsen). Anspach also sees tensions in the interplay between mimicry and rivalry, and he argues that the paired leopards express the symmetry and violence that are part of the mimetic process. While the leopards represent all-against-all symmetric violence that can get out of hand, the bull represents all-against-one violence and the emergence of the sacred is represented as large over-sized bulls in the wall paintings. Anspach talks of "the struggle of our ancestors to master their own violence," indicating a generative process.

Antonello and Gifford (2015, xii) very clearly see mimetic theory in generative terms; it is a "strong emergence" theory (xxiii); it proposes a dynamic (xii–xiii); it accounts for "the emergence, for endogenous

ecological reasons, of a specifically human culture" (xiii). They argue (xxi) against reductionist and functionalist accounts of the origins of religion. So, culture and religion cannot be explained by positing some genetic determinism, or any other single causal factor. "Imitation in humans, according to Girard, accounts, certainly, for the positive aspects of group intelligence, cultural transmission, and cooperation. Yet it is responsible also and conversely, in equal measure, for the 'negative' ones. It triggers negative forms of reciprocity between humans, such as envy, competition and rivalry" (xxx). There are thus cycles of social disorder and returns to order. Antonello and Gifford further point to this dialectic by noting that the Latin *deus* originates from the Old Persion *daiva* meaning "demon," and that the Greek etymology of "sacred" links both holy and accursed.

Girard points to a fallacy in ritual sacrifice in that people are deceived into thinking that the victim is responsible for the fact that peace is restored. So sacrifice "cannot, in any genuine or permanent way, remedy the ills addressed … This same pharmacology will be tried again, therefore, as soon as its effects wear off, and as the ills of conflict and violence reassert themselves" (Antonello and Gifford 2015, 283). As sacred violence "sacralizes less and less well, it produces more and more violence, but a violence that has lost the power to impose order on itself. Such is the modern world" (Dupuy 2015).

Alison (Chapter 9) describes other ways in which mimetic theory restlessly generates change. "For, naturally enough, where there is doubt, and thus dissent, concerning whether or not the right person (or group) has been 'got,' as the coming together of all against all yields to the unanimity of all against one, then unanimity and peace are never reached." He argues for a "runaway feedback loop" as humans gradually develop a notion of self, of us, against the sacrificed other. He argues for a thoroughly relational reading of Girard, in line with New Materialism and Relational Archaeology. He makes the fascinating suggestion that individuals identified as "other," for example in terms of gender identity, might have played particularly important roles in establishing social order. Alison very clearly conjures up a long-term dialectical process leading to unintended consequences such as sedentism and the domestication of plants and animals.

Wolfgang Palaver (Chapter 3) also sees a dynamic process leading to major change. He confronts the difference between contemporary western societies in which death is distanced and societies like Çatalhöyük in which the dead were circulated in the community and buried beneath house floors. This ancient practice is all the more surprising to us as in

many small-scale societies the death of individuals is seen as caused by malevolent acts. Death thus has the ability to disrupt the social flow. So once again we see the dynamism, the dialectical tensions, that characterize this approach. Archaeologists have tended to see death and burial ritual as creating collective solidarity (Kuijt 2008), whereas from a Girardian view death creates the possibility of scapegoating and putting the blame on others. In addition, the fear of death leads to an exteriorization into the killing of others. In all these ways, rather than creating cohesion, death has the ability to lead to more death and violence. Burial rituals are seen as practical mechanisms to respond to the violence unleashed by death.

Archaeology generally, and in particular studies of the transition to sedentism and settled life, have long been dominated by theories that give population increase or climate change as prime causes and that give precedence to adaptive mechanisms. Even when complex evolutionary processes are proposed, the accounts tend to focus on the responses of human agents to circumstances. Selective pressures are often identified and humans make rational choices in response. Radical alternatives have at times been championed, including those with Marxist-inspired perspectives (e.g. Bender 1978), but the dominant views have eschewed fully generative schemes. They have certainly seen religion as a secondary response rather than a focal driver of change. This may even be true of the work of Cauvin who, in his 1994 book *Naissance des divinités, naissance de l'agriculture*, certainly gives a central role to religion, but it remains entirely unclear what causes religious change itself – once more religion appears as a "deus ex machina." Perhaps the greatest attraction of the Girardian view is that it provides a strongly generative account in which religion, symbols, and culture are emergent properties of the mimetic process.

More important for the present discussion, Girard provides a generative account that can be seen as a component of the processes that led to sedentism and the origins of farming. The tensions between mimicry and rivalry, between "bad" and "good" violence, the doubts over whether the right person has been chosen as a sacrificial victim, the dangers exposed by the death of community members, the need to perform rituals that do not begin to lose their power and impact: all these factors generate change. Population rise and greater sedentism can be seen as pushed along by the need to stage larger and more effective sacrificial rituals (at Göbekli, for example). The domestication of animals can be seen as the outcome of the need to provide animals for sacrifice.

Intensification of production can be interpreted as the result of a runaway process whereby cycles of violence are countered by more intensive ritual events.

Some Problems

Despite the enormous potential of the Girardian view in contributing to the understanding of long-term change, there are a number of difficulties that need to be considered. There are, at one level, specific historical issues. For example, Girard argued (Palaver, Chapter 3) that "there is no culture without a tomb and no tomb without a culture; in the end the tomb is the first and only cultural symbol." The tomb is seen as resulting from the stoning of the first surrogate victim. Such a thesis works well for the Neolithic megaliths and cairns of northern Europe. That such monuments are not just memorials to the dead, or houses to the dead, but that they incorporate the idea of violence and sacrifice, of the sacred rising out of violence, is an arresting new perspective. And more generally it is true that the emergence of burial by humans occurs at about the same time as the marked growth of cultural elements that is associated with the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic in Europe. On the other hand, it is difficult to argue that *Homo erectus* did not have culture. Lower Palaeolithic handaxes themselves show much complexity, balance, symmetry, and we know that early humans built elaborate houses; so they had culture even if they did not have tombs. Beyond such specific issues, I wish to consider two more general problems.

Girard and Christianity

One problem, especially for an anthropologist or prehistorian, is the link between the theory and Christianity, exemplified in the inclusion in Johnsen's introduction of references to the Bible. Palaver (Chapter 3) refers to biblical accounts of the founding of Jericho, and compares the people of Çatalhöyük to Saint Francis. Chantre (Chapter 8) suggests that Girard's focus on the stag (rather than the bull) in his account of the Çatalhöyük imagery occurs because of the medieval and Renaissance heritage in which the animal is classically associated with Christ. Chantre also refers to the critique by Philippe Descola that Girard's theory has the distorting lens of the Judeo-Christian tradition. James Alison (Chapter 9) discusses at some length the ways in which Girard saw the Gospels as describing most clearly the scapegoat mechanism, brought out into the open and thus dispelled.

Alison (Chapter 9) goes on to confront the issue directly. He asks is "Girard's hypothesis too 'Christian' to be taken seriously?" The answer is perhaps surprising. Girardians argue that, far from the objective secular gaze being opposed to Christianity, it derived from it. In particular, the biblical account of the Passion unmasks the scapegoat mechanism by identifying the innocence of and sympathy for the sacrificed victim against whom all have turned. It is this shift that leads to the possibility of the objective scientific spirit. Girardians can thus be Buddhists or atheists as much as confessional Catholics, and their religious affiliation can be held separate from their exploration of Girardian hypotheses.

A critic might respond in return that the Christian influence is seen less in the unmasking of false consciousness regarding the emissary victim, and more in the overall emphasis on the sacrifice of a human. Why do rituals that link violence and the sacred have to derive from an original event, and why does that original event have to be human sacrifice? Why does the repetition of the transformation of all against all into all against one have to repeat an original event, and why does the one against which all turn have to be a human, rather than an animal or even an object? In his Chapter 9, Alison argues that there is often a misplaced focus on the notion of one originary event, and in fact the Girardian view sees a long drawn-out process. The issue of whether the sacrifice has to be of a human or an animal (or indeed of an object in the case of the sacrifice of a house as suggested in various chapters in this book) will be explored in the following section.

Do Hunters Sacrifice Animals?

A key component of mimetic theory is that the victim has to be both within the group, but also somehow different and distant from the group. The victim has to be something that can be turned against in order to return the society to order. Throughout this book it is assumed by the authors that domesticated animals make ideal candidates; they have been brought into the home to be domesticated and yet they remain other as animals.

However, in much of Girard's writing it is argued that the originary events or mechanisms must have involved humans turning against one sacrificial human victim. In Chapter 7, Johnsen contrasts Girard's view of the origin of religion in human sacrifice with Walter Burkert's (1983) account of a derivation from hunting, arguing that it is the former that allows for stages in hominid development in which human ancestors scavenged or were largely foragers rather than primary hunters. Girard

(2015, 228), as a result of his work on the Çatalhöyük paintings, came to accept some aspects of this theory, though he retained the view that human sacrifice must always have been linked to animal sacrifice in some way (2015, 229).

But is it possible for animals to act as emissary victims in hunter-gatherer societies (for example, at Göbekli Tepe and in the many millennia of human evolution before that)? Remember that Girard (2015, 229) stipulated that "the sacrificial victim ought to be at the same time different and similar to the members of the community." The difficulty here is that in most small-scale hunter-gatherer societies, humans have such a close relationship with hunted animals that it is not readily apparent that the animals can be seen as different or as victims to be turned against.

Russell (2012, 168–169) describes how in many foraging societies hunter and prey are in some ways seen as equal. She and Ingold (1994) note that animals are often thought to offer themselves to the hunter, and in return the hunter treats the animals properly and respectfully, shares out the meat correctly, disposes of the bones appropriately. In many societies an animal must consent to its own death for a hunter to be successful (Kent 1989, 12). Sharp (1988) argues that for the Chipewyan in the North American Subarctic, every encounter between man and prey is a sacrificial event. Note that it is not the human that sacrifices the animal but the animal that offers itself up.

The perspectivism examined by Viveiros de Castro (1998) in Amazonia is of significance here, as is the more comparative writing of Philippe Descola (1994). In moving away from the Cartesian distinction between nature and culture, Descola situates the nature–culture division as just one (he calls it naturalism) among four types of ontology, the others being animism, totemism, and analogism. An example of the last is the medieval and Renaissance Great Chain of Being. For the time-frame considered in this chapter the most relevant ontologies are animism and totemism. Animism according to Descola is common in South and North America, in Siberia, and in some parts of Southeast Asia where people endow plants, animals, and materials with a subjectivity and set up personal relations with them. The animals and spirits live in villages, exchange, follow kinship rules, and indeed have a culture similar to humans. There is always the same idea that vitality, energy, and fecundity constantly circulate between organisms thanks to the capture, the exchange, and the consuming of flesh. Totemism is to some degree about classification, but Descola sees it more as an ontology that is best represented in Aboriginal Australia. There, the main totem of a group of

humans – and all the human and non-human beings that are affiliated to it – is thought to share certain attributes (e.g. of physical appearance or temperament) by virtue of having a common origin in a place in the land. Many societies in fact have mixtures and blends of these ontologies that can exist side by side, and there is no simple relation with mode of production – thus pastoral groups with domestic animals may sustain a totemic ontology regarding wild animals. It is in my view extremely difficult to discern which ontologies were current at different moments during the Epipalaeolithic and Neolithic in the Middle East. But we do see in the work of de Castro and Descola that animals enter into human experience in fundamental ways (Alberti and Marshall 2009). Amongst many hunter-gatherer societies and in farming societies that place an emphasis on hunting, origin myths describe humans and animals as indistinct and part of the same society. Humans and animals are seen as closely related in many ontologies; animals may look after humans and vice versa.

The Descola scheme is perhaps over-formalized. Certainly Sahlins (2014) has argued for more complex, mixed, and fluid categorizations of various forms of animism and anthropomorphism. But the underlying problem for the Girardian perspective remains the same. How in such communal and participatory systems could animals have become emissary victims? How could they be treated as if "lynched"?

This issue is dealt with in Chapter 8 by Chantre who makes use of the Descola scheme of human–animal ontologies. In animistic hunter-gatherer societies there is a closeness and an interchange of equivalents between humans and animals. In such a context of oneness it is difficult to see how the killing of an animal could be seen as the lynching of a victim, or as a ritual replay of the sacrifice of a human against which everyone has turned. In totemic systems also the human and animal remain too close. It is only with the emergence of analogic systems, in which there is a greater heterogeneity of symbolic relations, that wild animals can stand for sacrificial victims and violence can be exteriorized. So for Chantre, it is only with domestication, when humans had come to distance animals, as a resource to be dominated, that the hunt can become symbolic of the turning of violence amongst all to violence against one.

Chantre's chapter is important in that it shows how humans extricated themselves from a certain (animistic and hunter-gatherer) relationship to the world by means of increasingly developed sacrificial and symbolic practices. So again there is a generative aspect to the scheme. But Chantre leaves us with the problem that for much of human evolution it

is difficult to see how wild animals could have acted as sacrificial victims in a Girardian sense. Amongst Amazonian hunter-gatherers animals have to be "de-subjectified" before they can be killed in the hunt, and perhaps similar procedures could have allowed forms of victimization, but the fact remains that we see clear images of making wild animals into victims only in farming contexts at Çatalhöyük. Knüsel et al. in Chapter 4 describe possible evidence of human sacrifice amongst Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers; it may indeed only have been possible for animal sacrifice to play a substitute role after animal domestication.

On the other hand, after domestication, cattle may have become too familiar, too much part of the household to act as victims. In Chapter 7, Johnsen discusses the conundrum that the famous wall paintings at Çatalhöyük showing the teasing and baiting of wild animals, and in particular bulls, occur in Levels South O and above (Mellaart's Levels V and above), at a time when domesticated cattle had already been introduced to the site. This puzzle is explained by Johnsen in Girardian terms. In order to be suitable candidates for sacrifice, the bulls had to be de-domesticated, made wild again, by teasing and baiting. The domestic, or quasi-domestic, bull had to be distanced, made culpable, before it could be used as the victim. It is of interest in this context that domestic cattle seem to have been adopted at Çatalhöyük and in central Anatolia rather later than in other parts of Anatolia (Arbuckle 2013). It is possible that quasi-domestic animals were kept wild for some time prior to the adoption of domestic cattle (current research at Çatalhöyük is exploring the question of cattle herd management prior to the take-up of domestic cattle).

Conclusions

Girardian perspectives have much to offer debate about Çatalhöyük, about the origins of sedentism and farming, and about broader theories in archaeology. Studies that explore the relationships between violence and the sacred, the roles of scapegoating and sacrifice, are collected especially in Part II in this volume. At the level of Çatalhöyük itself, the scapegoating hypothesis appears to offer a ready-made scheme with which to interpret the paintings in which "mobs" of humans "tease and bait" wild animals. The fascinating differences between the static symmetrical pairs of leopard reliefs and the vibrant circling of humans around bulls can be interpreted in terms of the contrasts between "all-against-all" and "all-against-one" forms of violence. The lack of traumatic interpersonal violence leading

to death at the site can be explained in terms of the effective playing out of the scapegoating process. That process in turn underpinned the strong force of taboos and prohibitions at the site, resulting in the distinctive repetition of house and burial forms over many centuries.

At the level of the origins of sedentism and farming, Girardian perspectives offer a generative process that aims to be fundamentally non-functionalist and non-reductive and that can contribute to the playing out of other generative processes (such as increased entanglements in things or competitive prestige exchange or competitive feasting – Hodder 2012; Hayden 1990; Bender 1978). This broader discussion of the role of mimetic theory is encountered more frequently in Part III in this volume, although there is much overlap in content with Part II. The interplay between mimicry and rivalry, the interdependence between "bad" and "good" violence, the need to perform rituals that do not begin to lose their power and impact, all these processes generate change and can be seen as contributing to increased sedentism, population increase, and the domestication of animals and plants. Religion is given a dynamic central role, not as a response to the needs of community formation, but itself generating community, sedentism, and new forms of economic life.

At the level of archaeology more generally, mimetic theory provides a startlingly fresh perspective on several taken-for-granted building blocks of archaeological theory and method. In particular it provides a new take on the transmission and diffusion of cultural traits. The cultural process becomes entangled with religion via mimetic theory; it becomes less passive and more actively involved in the constitution of society. The approach also offers an insight into debates within cognitive and evolutionary archaeologies, particularly regarding causal and functional processes, and provides a dialectical or generative alternative.

While Girardian theories offer productive new lines or argument for archaeology at various scales and levels, important difficulties remain. For many commentators a major stumbling block is the origin of the theories in, and their association with, Catholicism. These concerns are dealt with directly by Alison in Chapter 9, where a strong argument is made that the Christian heritage of the perspective has served to open up the debate to a diversity of interests and faiths. Another difficulty surrounds the claim repeatedly made in this volume that wild animals could be sacrificed in place of humans, or indeed that things such as buildings could be sacrificed as emissary victims. Once animals have been distanced and transformed through domestication, it is easy to perceive their role

in sacrifice, but it is less clear that wild animals could have played such a role in early hunter-gatherer societies. The resolution of these issues is further discussed in the Conclusion to this volume.

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2

Introduction to the Thought of René Girard

William A. Johnsen

The neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, taking his cue from Charles Darwin, offers a "big history" version for the biological evolution of the modern human self, beginning from single cells that seem to move purposefully under the microscope, to modern consciousness emerging in humans, where mind has come to brain, and "self comes to mind" (Damasio 2010). His evolutionary premise is that cells are disposed to agglomerate, and over immense biological time, some of these agglomerations successfully cohere into larger and more complex multiple-celled beings, and over still more time, these more complex beings further aggregate, scaling up eventually to our current biological population. Every evolutionary advance in complexity is maintained, governed, and protected by some disposition to self-mindedness, some version of attention to the integrity of the whole being which culminates in increasingly complex brains, minds and consciousness.

Similarly, René Girard's ambition is to provide a genetic and evolutionary interpretation of human culture. Girard lucidly builds out his hypothesis on the consequences of violence for any possible aggregating of mimetic proto-humans and what comes after (if they have any success in surviving), without of course having direct "evidence" to verify or falsify his model for these earliest stages. Darwin also built out human evolution in non-falsifiable terms; much of the evidence for evolution adduced afterwards had existed but was ignored until, as A. M. Hocart (1970) argues, researchers were able to recognize, for example, well after the publication of *Origin of the Species* in 1859, the significance of the first Gibraltar skulls discovered in 1848.

It was perhaps inevitable that Girard, who proposes a hypothesis to explain the origin and evolution of human culture up to modern times, would be drawn to consider the magnificent and startling agglomeration of the Neolithic proto-city Çatalhöyük, which sits on the threshold of so many important developments in human culture, such as the domestication of cattle and of sedentism itself (see Chantre, Chapter 8 this volume). Girard always insisted on the scientific nature of his research; he relished such opportunities to test his scapegoat hypothesis for the origin of religion, and what could be more enticing than the famous murals which seem to demonstrate the ritual killing of animals?

For Girard, the powerful effect of the culmination and resolution of spontaneous violence finalizing on one last opponent is the first non-instinctual moment of group attention, a scaling up beyond the group attention to the leader in cohesion under dominance patterns. This moment of attention is then the point of origin for ritual, which tries to repeat it for the sake of its conclusion, hoping to appease whatever transcendent force causes violence and peace, but it is also the first moment of symbolic signification, the birth of the first sign emerging from a process of exception, "excepting" the last victim of a spontaneous violence finally unanimous from the rest who surround him. From later ritual emerges a replacement or substitute victim who is somewhat outside the group, less likely to set off a new stage of reprisal by potential allies or sympathizers, and therefore more pleasing to the gods or forces responsible. This moment when the taunted bull is perhaps dying, according to many who study the wall paintings, would be the very moment of this emergent sign of the sacred (see Clare et al., Chapter 5 this volume).

Thus humans are saved from their own violence by not recognizing it as theirs, expelling it by blaming it on everyone else, even the gods, everyone except themselves. This action for securing the favor of whatever transcendent force determines events is their religion. Misunderstanding is necessary; to understand would be to lose the efficacy of ritual. "Functionalism" would be irreligious, an impiety, although one that sometimes occurs in religion, that a certain behavior or ritual will guarantee a resulting action or outcome. Such méconnaissance (Girard's term) is inherently unstable, but instability is more likely to produce a new misunderstanding in an opposite direction than comprehending the truth of human violence. Yet Girard views the evolutionary dynamic of religion historically as the gradual unveiling of myth and ritual's veiling of human violence as the sole responsibility of humankind. The axial age which stands between us and

Çatalhöyük marks for Girard the crucial breakthrough to the truth, and the filling in of this long history of human culture can be seen as leading up to the crisis for the practice of violence expelling violence, and the difficult consequences following the disarming of the only tool we have ever had for peace. Our post-religious, secular age (it is currently Charles Taylor's term) is produced by the axial age, for Girard pre-eminently through the agency of the Judeo-Christian writings, but his model for religion as a human institution is secular and scientific (see James Alison, Chapter 9 and Jean-Pierre Dupuy, Chapter 10, this volume).

So much for the attraction of Çatalhöyük for mimetic theorists. But why send along yet another group following yet another theory such as Girard's mimetic theory to a research site such as Çatalhöyük, already awash under wave after wave of visiting theorists – theologians, anthropologists, social scientists, Gaiaists? Seemingly, every visitor to Anatolia without a trowel has a theory. Girard is himself known as "the last hedgehog," notorious for his all-encompassing scapegoat hypothesis, so to disable in advance whatever prejudices that exist on the ground against "off the shelf theory" (a somewhat misleading term), I will explain mimetic theory as carefully as I can, as plain as dirt (in the American expression), carefully distinguishing Girard's inside and the outside view of sacrifice.

Following Girard's Approach to a Theory of Religion

Girard began his work (*Deceit, Desire and the Novel* [1961; Girard 1965]) by recognizing an uncommon understanding of desire common to the great novelists: Cervantes, Stendhal, Flaubert, Dostoyevsky, Proust. Great writers recognize that humans are mimetic creatures, they copy each other, so that when we copy the beliefs and desires of someone else, we can easily enter rivalry with our neighboring models, whenever our desires converge on to some treasure which cannot be shared. The more the disciple and model compete, the more violent they become, until they become each other's model and each other's rival, and their rivalry becomes the new object of attention, victory over the other now having more value than the object itself. And their conflict inevitably entangles others. The judicial system specifically addresses this problem of breakaway rivalry with impartial law and overpowering enforcement to give the decisive last word of punitive violence that cannot be answered, but wherever it weakens or is underpowered, such as the international arena, breakaway violence can feed on itself.

Girard then asked himself in *Violence and the Sacred* (1972; Girard 1977) how earlier cultures survived the spread of violence without a judicial system to police, to terminate, such rivalries. His answer is: violence itself, if it takes a certain but not inevitable path towards resolving a mêlée of antagonism into a finale of all against one. The "bad" violence which makes everyone an enemy of each other can become the "good" violence all visit on their common enemy. This miraculous transformation of violence is the basis, the model, for archaic religion, specifically, sacrifice powered by scapegoating.

The great synthesizing but undertheorized movement in anthropology (Frazer, Freud, and Durkheim) towards explaining the near universal dependence of archaic culture on religion and sacrifice challenged Girard to produce a better theory for religion than Frazer's version of scapegoating, Freud's version of the original victim, or Durkheim's "effervescence," to produce instead a generative model which describes a non-deterministic mechanism to account for these effects, to explain the origin, survival, and evolution of human culture in religion.

Girard's mimetic theory recognizes both the continuities and discontinuities between animal culture and human culture. At some point, perhaps because of increasing group size, brain size, or environmental factors, pre-human or almost human agglomerations can no longer survive rivalry and interspecies violence through the dominance patterns typical of animal culture. They must evolve a sustainable culture or die off. For Girard, the sustainability of all human culture begins in religion. The humans who survived, who left an appreciable record, are the children of religion.

How Does Girard Define Religion?

Religion is the crediting of some force greater than the human for humankind's survival, especially for its escape from killing itself off in a rampage of violence. Archaic religions across the world resemble each other because they more or less successfully address the same primary problem of intra-species violence, the capacity of humans to kill themselves off, with the same solution: a fortuitous but enabling misunderstanding of how to put down violence with violence by unanimous blaming and punishing one for the violence of all. This does not mean that humans inevitably, genetically, are violent and/or religious, nor does it mean that this solution is genetically guaranteed, as the neurological approach to archaic religious consciousness perhaps suggests. Girard proposes a *non-deterministic* mechanism, an outcome for raging human violence that is

possible but not at all inevitable. We may well suppose that the failures of religion as well as non-religious "social contracts" produced untold alternative social structures and strategies which did not survive long enough to produce a historical record for us to read. Unlike most other global theories, Girard's mimetic hypothesis for the singular character of the foundation of human culture across the world in religion operates without the disabling crutch of unattested tribal migrations, a collective unconscious, or genetic/neural "hardwiring." It is based rather in the indisputable and increasingly important researched subject of common human behavior as profoundly mimetic. Imitation as repetition, as learning, is vital to coevolution, but as rivalry can wipe out any agglomeration of proto- or modern humankind.

Girard proposes a generative mechanism to explain how humans have adapted for survival (or have not adapted) based in the consequences, both malevolent and benign, of their misunderstanding of their own mimetic behavior. Mimetic theory traces the evolution of social forms from an originary unanimous accusation of violence to apparently very different structures of sacred kingship or egalitarian judicial systems, to name just two apparently polarized eventualities.

Girard convincingly explains that prohibitions and ritual are both contrary and complementary to religion's control of human violence. Prohibitions, which outlaw any behavior which could lead to conflict, are set aside, even mocked, in ritual. Rituals usually begin in general misrule, encouraging the very behavior ordinarily restricted by prohibitions, in order to invoke the only workable process which will stop it.

Girard's generative mechanism thus accounts for similarity but also variation. It is not at all disproved by the seeming opposition between the behavior prohibition outlaws (incest, for example) and what ritual requires (incest, for example), or variation in ritual and prohibition within and across cultures (see Anspach, Chapter 6 this volume). Scholars such as Jonathan Z. Smith (1987) who question the explanatory value of such permanent terms as religion, ritual, and sacrifice (also see Faraone and Neiden 2012) by focusing on variation, and outlawing by fiat the internal motivating energy of theory to always increase its explanatory power, are, as Girard suggests, on a different path. Girard is unapologetic about the necessary and ambitious reductiveness of scientific theory which "must combine the maximum of actual uncertainty with the maximum of potential certainty" (Girard 1986, 98).

Ritual is an interpretation and recapitulation of the founding event, the seemingly miraculous peace that follows an outbreak of a mêlée which

catches up everyone but finally focuses down on one (the last) victim, who becomes retroactively responsible for all the violence and calamity. A community that survives this experience (by no means a given) may have learned that the only way to get back peace when it starts to fall apart again is to follow violence out to the end, to repeat the radical process of collectively discovering its single cause, stomping it out until no sign of violence is left.

If it survives such a radical practice, the group may learn for the next time to turn more quickly and efficiently, losing fewer members, to the end which brings peace. The conclusion of ritual delivers the sacred, the manifestation of the cause, but also the priceless end in peace. Thus the sacred is ambivalent, symbolizing everything that is wrong, but also everything that is right again. As interpretation, as religion, some communities will focus their ritual attention on the ultimate purgative all-against-one, on the last one as responsible for all the violence (s/he is the enemy of the people), minimizing any credit for peace going to the accused, but some will focus rather on the last one as the friend of the people, the last combatant before peace comes, as being the one who announces the arrival of peace, who delivered peace, on his or her own transcendent authority, in the name of another transcendent authority, or both. The former will evolve over immense periods of time into the judicial system which emphasizes accusation and punishment on the part of the whole community, innocent by comparison. The latter will ultimately emphasize the single quasi-divine figure who rules the community, whom they must worship and to whom they must render up offerings. This determines, in effect, the ritual distinction between the generally older and pre-existing form of sacrifice as cleansing the community of pollution as required by a higher power, and sacrifice as an immaculate and precious gift offering to a higher power.

How can we understand (from the outside view) the dynamic of their misunderstanding (from the inside view)? The anxious stomping out of a potential runaway fire is perhaps a good phenomenological analogy for acknowledging the urgent felt need to participate in preventing violence. We don't rub out a fire with just the force it needs. We fear violence, so we attack it, we obliterate it, just to be sure. A snowball gathering immense force as it comes down a hill is a good image for recognizing the felt inevitability of violence horrifically accumulating everything to itself as it bears down on us. Neither example should suggest any "functionalist" approach in Girard's hypothesis. Our excessive zeal in stomping out fires or our panicked belief that the descending snowball

is targeting us testifies rather to the lingering "religious" quality of our fears that transcendent malignant forces are massing against us. Yet we should nevertheless try to reason out as precisely as we can from the inside, but not simply describe sympathetically or "imagistically" (in both the common sense and the special sense Harvey Whitehouse gives it in *Modes of Religiosity* [Whitehouse 2004]) the founding of the ritual event in breakaway human violence.

What, More Precisely, Is that Founding Event?

Humans are creatures more mimetic than others; they copy each other with greater effect. When they copy each other's desires, they will become conflictual whenever the objects desired cannot be shared. Beyond a certain threshold, perhaps simply beyond a certain size population, hominid groups cannot restore peace through the dominance patterns which pacify animal and proto-human groups. Brute power and intimidation can only carry so far. As violence spreads, it creates a center of attention; "outliers" must address, match, copy, equalize this expanding violence at the center it creates or be engulfed as its (next) victim.

Violence proceeds from rivalry, the consequence of imitating another's desire. Why is violence copied, how is violence "contagious"? Why does it "snowball," why does it spread so far, so fast, like wildfire? Girard does not give the quick (non-)answer, "because that is the way people are – violent, and that is the manner of violence, to be contagious." He reasons out this sequence which recurs everywhere in the world, in the same pattern, that it recurs *as a mechanism*. And we should not short-circuit our own thinking by "ritually" depending on mythical shortcuts or agencies such as "contagion" or "polarization" which only depict the steps or algorithms a community invokes to speed up the process to its resolution. Girard begins with the universal claim of humans that they want peace from violence. It is as true now as it ever was: we all want peace, we never admit to being aggressive. It is all these others who seem to be aggressive, who want what we need, who want "our" things, and violence is the only way to retrieve the peace that they interrupted.

In the ensuing mêlée, everyone returns the violence against them. With interest, as Girard says, for we all love peace and hate violence, violently. As they contest with each other, combatants become more like each other. If mimetic violence makes all the same, then, as Girard reasons, it becomes easier for one person, ultimately, to be the same single enemy, to stand for everyone's enemy. Easier, yes, but how could that happen?

In the spread of violent conflict, a third person or more no doubt takes one of the sides of the first two rivals to stop the violent "other" one, but perhaps also to hide themselves from becoming the potential next victim to the victor's violence; as the attention of the victors expands to see if there is any more violence to be put down, this third person increases their group's size when s/he imitates their collective violence on yet another person, inviting the group to copy its violence against another (which is of course itself a copy of the group's violence) and, perhaps consciously, but perhaps not, deflecting the group's violence away from itself.

How then does peace return from everyone imitating each other's violence, from blow and counter-blow, when reciprocal violence engulfs everyone? A mêlée will exhaust the group's limited resources, will wear down into a few left, into finishing off one last. Thus peace would return when the last antagonist or antagonists are vanquished by all who are left. The more lop-sided the final result is, the better it is for group survival; the best score for any iteration is all against one. Violence which spreads "contagiously," engulfing all against all, in appearance and effect "polarizes," finally, exhaustively, into all against (the last) one. Ritual sacrifice commemorates, formalizes this spontaneous outbreak and resolution of runaway violence, economizing it, but (mis-)attributing it to some causative force external to itself.

Where does the increasingly formalized ritual come from, as opposed to a runaway mechanism? It is as if the group asked itself, "what were we doing the last time peace arrived, or the last time the transcendent powers or forces that control everything gave us peace in the midst of everyone fighting?" They remember: all were united in opposition to the last antagonist. Again, for the survival of the group, the best, final score is all against one.

But how does that happen? How does endless reciprocity polarize? Lapidating as a collective act well-attested in the anthropological literature is especially susceptible to a mimetic reading, and Girard regards the great texts of sacred and "secular scripture" (Northrop Frye's term [1976] for literature) as fellow theorists of human behavior, especially mimetic behavior. The anthropological lesson which Girard draws from the biblical story of the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1–11) is that throwing a stone is at once an accusation and a self-exculpation: the target is made responsible for contamination, the stone-thrower becomes an innocent trying to beat it down. Jesus' analysis of scapegoating reveals its rivalrous spirit by not following the accusing crowd's urging of him to accuse, to be the first stone-thrower. Instead he says, "Let anyone among

you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her" (*Revised Standard Version*). He makes them see exactly what they are proposing to do. Instead of each imitating, as quickly as possible, the first stone-thrower, to show they are as innocent as the first, as they usually do, here, in this case, the first stone-thrower, the first one to declare his innocence, would now (thanks to Jesus' unwelcome critical introduction) have to pass the test of the group's resentful gaze by declaring in their face that he is more innocent than they are, first among them, the most innocent of all, the least accusable.

The group is still mimetic but they imitate instead the retreat of the most likely first-stone thrower, not rampaging but presumably conscious, departing in birth order, oldest first. Jesus solemnly completes the pattern when he asks the woman if there are any accusers left, then seals her answer with his refusal to accuse, which came first and then last.

Lapidation is powered and organized by the dynamic embedded in the analogy of snowballing described earlier: the outlier is warding off the approaching threat of becoming the next object of the group's violence by deflecting and redirecting the accusation, by seducing the group to imitate her or his imitation of their own violence against someone else. And "seducing" may be too strong, too calculating, or functionalist an explanation. Perhaps this outlier facing a violence approaching her or him cannot really believe s/he is the problem, s/he cannot "stand it," let us say, to see her/himself as the cause of violence; it has to be someone else.

In particular, we must be careful not to cheat this relentlessly logical and ordinary explanation of runaway violence by turning "polarization" or "contagion" into magic processes which without further explanation "cause" these emergent patterns of all-against-one. We cannot "accuse" them; they are but descriptions, formalizations of the consequent patterns of human mimetic behavior. Contagion does not explain mimesis; mimesis explains social contagion, perhaps even the biological process of contagion.

Cultural Processes and Rites

Çatalhöyük is crucial to understanding the relation of the emerging institution of the city to evolving Neolithic death and burial practices: if violence is "the heart and soul of the sacred" (Girard 1977 [1972]), then religion's attention to death begins not in some abstract idea of the afterlife, but in the pressing circumstances of the present. Where there is no transcendent mechanism such as police or army to take retribution out

of the hands of the victims, every behavior must be moderated in favor of elaborate prohibitions lest it incite rivalry. Every death is a potential crisis because it is the tangible proof of an act of violence: "who killed this person who didn't want to die?" To be safe, when someone dies, everyone living and dead must be pacified (see Palaver, Chapter 3 this volume). The processing of cadavers, like ritual sacrifice, relentlessly pushes through the disruptive process of decomposition and disincarnation to finally arrive at the purgative purity (and safety) of whitened bones (Girard 2000). Perhaps the process of firing some of the living units may have followed burial practice, to speed up the unit's decomposition to avoid some threat of violence.

Girard argues that we frustrate our understanding of archaic society by arbitrarily distinguishing between cultural processes which appear successful, and thus pragmatic or functional (such as the domestication of cattle), and processes which are not successful as religious, mere superstitions (rainmaking, etc). Is it logical to believe that archaic communities kept unruly beasts for untold generations in the hope that benefits would accrue to their future generations? Cattle domestication is the unforeseen and benign result of a religious sacrificial process (see Johnsen, Chapter 7 this volume), and Girard is bold enough to propose that cooking and fermentation also follow the process of order proceeding from breakdown and disintegration (Girard 2000).

Girard turned on its head Levi-Strauss's famous but modest defense that all myth, no matter how unruly, always takes the so-called "biological facts" of the human origin of humans (conception) into account (Levi-Strauss 1962). It is likely, Girard reasoned, that humans could not discover the connection between sex and birth nine months later without some religious restriction on behavior to make such results visible (Girard 1977). The presence and absence of religious figurations of women is provocative to researchers of the Neolithic in general and Çatalhöyük in particular. That women give life is a fact; everything else is religion (Scubla 2016).

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PART II

VIOLENCE AND THE SACRED

3

Death in Çatalhöyük

Wolfgang Palaver

> Today people live in rooms that have never been touched by death – dry dwellers of eternity; and when their end approaches, they are stowed away in sanatoria or hospitals by their heirs.
>
> *(Benjamin 1996, 151)*

Looking back at Çatalhöyük from our own world we may be shocked to discover how closely the people lived to their own dead. Whereas the modern world is increasingly distancing itself from death by pushing the dead out of sight, so that it ends up with rooms "that have never been touched by death" as it was expressed by the German philosopher Walter Benjamin at the beginning of the twentieth century, the people in Çatalhöyük "seem to have slept on the platforms where their parents and grandparents were buried" (Hodder 2006, 24). Çatalhöyük was "as much a cemetery as a settlement" (Hodder 2006, 99). Contrary to our modern western world that is, at least since the nineteenth century, characterized by its denial of death, we discover death at the center of cults and cultures from the beginnings of human civilization until today if we look at the Andaman Islanders or Tikopia (see Becker 1975, 1997; Ariès 2008). Today we know that animals also respond to death significantly and that there is no clear-cut distinction between animals and human beings in this regard (Drake 2015; Waal 2015). The recent discovery of the early species of hominin *Homo naledi*, who disposed of their dead in a remote South African cave, triggered a discussion in which primatologists like Frans de Waal emphasized the fact that a special attitude towards death can already be observed among animals.

Death as Ultimate Violence

We also have to acknowledge the deep connection between death and violence. According to Girard, "death is the ultimate violence that can be inflicted on a living being" (Girard 1977, 255). The German sociologist Wolfgang Sofsky calls death "violence as such," identifying it with "absolute force" (Sofsky 2005, 58). To underline his insight he refers to the writer and cultural anthropologist Elias Canetti and his understanding of the "survivor" personifying the human temptation to fight death by surviving others: "Horror at the sight of death turns into satisfaction that it is someone else who is dead. The dead man lies on the ground while the survivor stands" (Canetti 1984, 227; cf. Becker 1975, 105–106, 132). The longing to survive death easily leads to killing because it strengthens the assumption that killing overcomes death by becoming its master. According to the cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker, "man has always casually sacrificed life for more life" (Becker 1975, 24). This is not only true for individual survivors as we know them from our modern world and as they were clearly in the mind of Canetti, who tried to understand paranoid power in the twentieth century, but it is also true for human groups at the dawn of human culture. Becker, who was partly influenced by Canetti, rightly remarked that in tribal societies not individuals but the people were the survivor (Becker 1975, 132). The individuals in archaic societies overcame their death anxiety by identifying fully with the group and its cultural ideology. This was clearly seen by the Austrian psychoanalyst Otto Rank, who also had a decisive influence on Becker and who understood sacrifice as an important means to overcome death anxiety: "The death fear of the ego is lessened by the killing, the sacrifice, of the other; through the death of the other, one buys oneself free from the penalty of dying, of being killed" (Rank 1947, 130; cf. Becker 1975, 108). This sacrificial killing is, according to Rank, "a purely psychic ideology, which rests upon the primitive feeling of the group (collectivity)" (Rank 1947, 130). Sacrifices strengthened ritually the survival of the group: "Ceremoniously killing captives is a way of affirming power over life, and therefore over death" (Becker 1975, 102). Also Walter Burkert, a German scholar of Greek mythology and cult, observed that killing is part of many funerary rites and refers to "the pleasurable shock of survival" that follows the confrontation with the death of others (Burkert 1983, 50).

Meat-eating hunters also aimed at mastering death by incorporating the power of animals. Trophies of killed animals symbolized this acquisition

of power over death (Becker 1975, 107). If these people participated in scapegoating, they not only followed a mimetic lure, but they also wanted to overcome death through surviving others: "He moves in to kill the sacrificial scapegoat with the wave of the crowd, not because he is carried along by the wave, but because *he likes* the psychological barter of another life for his own: 'You die, not me' " (Becker 1975, 138). This identification with the group that roots in death anxiety can even lead to self-sacrifice if it is seen as a means to immortality: "The individual gives himself to the group because of *his desire* to share immortality; we must say, even, that he is willing to die in order *not* to die" (Becker 1975, 139). Our modern world is full of examples of this sacrificial grasping of immortality if we think of piles of sacrificed soldiers in national wars or of contemporary suicide bombers. This pattern of collective and sacrificial survival seems to accompany humankind from its very beginnings until our world of today.

In the eyes of archaic people, death and violence were so closely linked that it was assumed that death was caused by someone's evil intention (Illich 1995, 178–179). Sigmund Freud quoted Westermarck's insight that archaic cultures were not able to distinguish between violent and natural death and that this explains the anxious attitude towards the dead who are seen as dangerous and revengeful beings:

> According to primitive ideas a person only dies if he is killed – by magic if not by force – and such a death naturally tends to make the soul revengeful and ill-tempered. It is envious of the living and is longing for the company of its old friends; no wonder, then, that it sends them diseases to cause their death.
>
> (Freud 2001, 69)

We also can refer to more contemporary examples where death is immediately attributed to some malignant evildoer. The French anthropologist Phillipe Descola in the 1970s studied the Achuar, an Amazonian community, and described how the death of a woman is immediately attributed to a certain man who functions as a "scapegoat" for the angry mourners (Descola 1996, 378). But also the soul of the dead woman itself is seen as a danger to the community, and the funerary rites – an "ostracism" of her image and her memory – aim at her ultimate departure because "the living cannot be truly living unless the dead are completely dead" (Descola 1996, 381).

Finally, we also have to realize that an archaic group would be so shaken by the death of one of its members that social rituals were needed to ensure the survival of the group (Illich 1995, 203). It has been the role

of religion to help humanity from its very beginning to deal with the threat of death, as broadly described by Malinowski:

> The ceremonial of death which ties the survivors to the body and rivets them to the place of death, the beliefs in the existence of the spirit, in its beneficent influences or malevolent intentions, in the duties of a series of commemorative or sacrificial ceremonies – in all this religion counteracts the centrifugal forces of fear, dismay, demoralization, and provides the most powerful means of reintegration of the group's shaken solidarity and of the re-establishment of its morale.
>
> (Malinowski 1948, 35)

Culture and religion emerged as remedies for death-fearing humans, the animal that is especially conscious of its own end. Looking at culture more closely it is even not possible to separate it from religion in its broader meaning because "culture itself is sacred, since *it* is the 'religion' that assures in some way the perpetuation of its members" (Becker 1975, 4). The terror that followed the awareness of their mortality led our ancestors to the imagination of the supernatural (Solomon et al. 2015, 67–68). But this should be understood not as something primarily cognitive but as a deeply practical and social matter: "Our ancestors received support for their beliefs from one another, but they also needed some tangible signs that the invisible world really existed. Rituals, art, myth, and religion – features of every known culture – together made it possible for people to construct, maintain, and concretize their supernatural conceptions of reality" (Solomon et al. 2015, 69; cf. Becker 1975, 7).

Looking at the beginnings of humanity we realize that a special treatment of the dead became more important the closer we approach *Homo sapiens*. Neanderthals, for instance, buried their dead and we have archaeological evidence that the oldest burial took place at Tabun Cave in Israel around 100,000 years ago (Drake 2015). From the Mousterian (70,000–50,000 BC) we have evidence of burials by *Homo sapiens* (Eliade 1978, 8–13; cf. Balter 2005, 279). These burials show clear signs of a belief in an afterlife (the use of red ocher as a substitute for blood; burials oriented towards the east connecting the hope of rebirth with the course of the sun; intentional burials in the fetal position probably also referring to rebirth; offerings of objects of personal adornment and remains of meals).

The terror of mortality that explains the emergence of burials at the beginning of human civilization has never left our world. It shaped rituals and religions until the beginning of the modern period and has not yet disappeared if we consider recent attempts to overcome death with the help

of advanced technology. It was Elias Canetti who understood much of his work as a fight against death, criticizing thereby all religions that make death acceptable, and who also understood that a scientific overcoming of death will result in a new type of religious endeavor: "Knowledge can lose its deadliness only through a new religion that does not acknowledge death" (Canetti 1978, 45). Also Jaron Lanier, a computer scientist and computer philosophy writer, criticizes all technological promises to overcome death as a new type of religion: "What most outsiders have failed to grasp is that the rise to power of 'net-based monopolies' coincides with a new sort of religion based on becoming immortal" (Lanier 2014, 310).

In the following I will apply two anthropological approaches to the meaning of death in Çatalhöyük that are very well aware of the close relationship between death, violence, and religion, also focusing clearly on the ritual dimension of the last. Both these approaches also deal extensively with sacrifice as well as with scapegoating. The first approach is mimetic theory as it was developed by the French-American cultural anthropologist René Girard. With the help of mimetic theory, this chapter describes the role of death and burials at the foundation of human settlements. The second approach is terror management theory, a social psychology that was developed by Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon, and Tom Pyszczynski, following the work of cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker, who has much in common with Girard's mimetic theory in terms of his emphasis on ritual to understand the beginnings of human culture as well as his reflections on sacrifice and scapegoating (Becker 1975; cf. Webb 1998, 2009, 63–95). Terror management theory recognizes how much death anxiety has driven the development of human civilization: "Over the course of human history, the terror of death has guided the development of art, religion, language, economics, and science. It raised the pyramids in Egypt and razed the Twin Towers in Manhattan" (Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski 2015, x). In a recent popular introduction to terror management theory these three authors also recognize that the "modern immortalists" follow the age-old yearnings for immortality, yearnings that connect "ancient burial sites to futuristic cryogenics labs" (Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski 2015, 92–99, 210). Terror management theory will help us to understand how death anxiety is related to cultural or religious worldviews. Girard's mimetic theory and Becker's anthropology converge on the problem of human beings whose "fear of being or becoming nothing and nobody" easily leads them "toward victimization" (Webb 2009, 87). Human rivalry plays an important role in both these approaches. According to Girard, it is a fundamental "lack of

being" that causes human beings to imitate the desire of others, leading to rivalry and violence if the objects of borrowed desire cannot be shared (Girard 1977, 146). Becker starts with death anxiety that necessitates an existential self-esteem of cosmic significance that people can only get from others, easily ending up in competitive struggles for recognition:

> An animal who gets his feeling of worth symbolically has to minutely compare himself to those around him, to make sure he doesn't come off second-best. Sibling rivalry is a critical problem that reflects the basic human condition: it is not that children are vicious, selfish, or domineering. It is that they so openly express man's tragic destiny: he must desperately justify himself as an object of primary value in the universe; he must stand out, be a hero, make the biggest possible contribution to world life, show that he *counts* more than anything or anyone else.
>
> (Becker 1997, 4; cf. Becker 1971, 78)

Society, according to Becker, is a "mythical hero-system in which people serve in order to earn a feeling of primary value, of cosmic specialness, of ultimate usefulness to creation, of unshakable meaning" (Becker 1997, 5). This is not only true of archaic societies but is generally valid. Becker's broad use of the term religion allows him to apply it also to western societies of the modern world. Mythical hero-systems try to outlive death by giving their members a feeling of lasting importance: "They earn this feeling by carving out a place in nature, by building an edifice that reflects human value: a temple, a cathedral, a totem pole, a sky-scraper, a family that spans three generations" (Becker 1997, 5). Çatalhöyük may be seen as one particular offspring of a very old mythical hero-system.

The Tomb as the Cornerstone of Culture

His discovery of the Neolithic site at Göbekli Tepe in 1994 led the late German archaeologist Klaus Schmidt to the conclusion that Lewis Mumford's neglected thesis that ritual centers preceded larger human settlements should be rehabilitated (Schmidt 2008, 248–250). Mumford's book *The City in History* came out in 1961 and could not include even early results from the excavation of Çatalhöyük that was just going on at about that time. Mumford's book is indeed worth looking at because it claims that cemeteries and shrines precede larger human settlements. It was the ceremonial concern for the dead and burials that led to larger villages and cities:

> Mid the uneasy wanderings of Paleolithic man, the dead were the first to have a permanent dwelling: a cavern, a mound marked by a cairn, a collective barrow. These were the landmarks to which the living probably returned at intervals,

to commune with or placate the ancestral spirits. Though food-gathering and hunting do not encourage the permanent occupation of a single site, the dead at least claim that privilege … The city of the dead antedates the city of the living. In one sense, indeed, the city of the dead is the forerunner, almost the core, of every living city. Urban life spans the historic space between the earliest burial ground for dawn man and the final cemetery, the Necropolis, in which one civilization after another has met its end.

(Mumford 1989, 7)

Today Schmidt's excavations at Göbekli Tepe make Mumford's claims more plausible. Greenberg, Solomon, and Pyszczynski refer to an example from the Sungir archaeological site in Russia that was inhabited 28,000 years ago to show how early burials were connected to a religious worldview. Sungir consisted of

houses, hearths, storage pits, and tool production areas. The remnants of multiple elaborate burials were also found there, including those of two young people and a sixty-year-old man. Each body was decorated with pendants, bracelets, and shell necklaces, and dressed in clothing embellished with more than four thousand ivory beads; it would have taken an artisan an hour to make a single bead. The youths were buried head to head and flanked by two mammoth tusks. By devoting such inordinate amounts of time and effort to generate these elaborate burial constructions, the inhabitants of Sungir seemed to show that the symbolic supernatural world they created took priority over more mundane, here-and-now practicalities. Moreover, the grave sites indicate a belief in an afterlife; after all, why bother getting dressed up for a journey to the void?

(Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski 2015, 68; cf. Balter 2005, 279–280)

Archeological sites like Göbekli Tepe and Çatalhöyük are also discussed in this overview by Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski that illustrates how human beings have dealt with death and life throughout human history. Following the work of Klaus Schmidt, they understand Göbekli Tepe (9600–8200 BC) as a "center of a cult of death" that later led to agriculture and the development of larger settlements (Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski 2015, 77; cf. Schmidt 2008; Coppens 2009; Gifford and Antonello 2015). Schmidt's hypothesis, however, is still in discussion because of the current absence of human burials. Schmidt expected that later excavations will find them (Clare et al., Chapter 5 this volume). But there are some interesting traces illustrating again how central death may have been at this site with its huge standing-stone rings:

Though archaeologists found no signs of human habitation or cultivation at Göbekli Tepe, they did unearth human bones mingled with the remains of vulture wings. (Vultures were particularly prominent among the animal carvings.) The

bones were coated in red ochre and appeared to be the remnants of ritual burials. Diggers also found an engraving of a naked woman and another of a decapitated corpse surrounded by vultures.

(Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski 2015, 76)

The settlement at Çatalhöyük (7100–6000 BC), which was inhabited about two thousand years after Göbekli Tepe, is deeply connected with this earlier place of cult if we look at its symbolism (Hodder and Meskell 2011). Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski highlight the connection between the two sites by referring to the funerary customs at Çatalhöyük: "Anthropologists found decapitated skeletons; the skulls were again painted with ochre. Also interesting was the presence of carved vultures, which also appear prominently in the carvings at Göbekli Tepe" (Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski 2015, 77).

An early predecessor of Mumford was the Italian philosopher and historian Giambattista Vico (1668–1774), who emphasized the eminent importance of burials for human culture. He observed that it is a universal human custom to bury the dead and also recognized that the Latin term for humanity, *humanitas*, "comes first and properly from *humando*, 'burying'" (Vico 1948, § 12; cf. § 333, § 337; Harrison 2003, xi). René Girard is one of those modern thinkers who comes close to Vico's insights into the relationship between religion and basic human customs. He also focuses on the importance of burial rites. According to Girard, "once something like humanity exists there also exists the strange behaviour toward the dead that we call funerary: the refusal to see death naturalistically, as merely the cessation of life, with the cadaver no more than a sort of irreparably broken, useless object" (Girard 1987, 80). He even claims that "funerary rituals could well … amount to the first actions of a strictly cultural type" (Girard 1987, 164).

Girard, however, goes a step further in his reflection on burials, funerary rites, and how they are related to human culture. According to Girard, funerary rites stem from a primordial victimary mechanism that overcame an internal crisis in an archaic group by expelling or killing one of its members who was transformed into its god (Girard 1977, 254–256; 1987, 80–83, 163–165). In cultures in which the gods are absent or insignificant, the dead often take the place of the missing divinities, incarnating violence like archaic gods. Worship of the dead functions like the worship of archaic gods, helping to maintain order in the community. Death throws a community into crisis and it is not by chance that many funeral rites show clear parallels to the foundational

mechanism which also aims to create order out of chaos. In Descola's description of funerary rites among the Achuar, we can clearly discover elements echoing the scapegoat mechanism. Funerary rites strengthen the solidarity of the survivors and illustrate a certain union between life and death that goes back to the foundational murder. Through the lens of his hypothesis about the victimary mechanism, Girard recognized the tomb as the center of human culture:

> What is essential is the cadaver as talisman, as the bearer of life and fertility; culture always develops as a *tomb*. The tomb is nothing but the first human monument to be raised over the surrogate victim, the first most elemental and fundamental matrix of meaning. There is no culture without a tomb and no tomb without a culture; in the end the tomb is the first and only cultural symbol. The above-ground tomb does not have to be invented. It is the pile of stones in which the victim of unanimous stoning is buried. It is the first pyramid.
>
> (Girard 1987, 83; cf. Girard 2007, 39–42)

Girard's thesis that the pile of stones thrown at the foundational victim forms a first pyramid was further developed by the French philosopher Michel Serres in his book *Statues*, in which he underlines the foundational character of the Egyptian pyramids: "Every Egyptian brings his stone over the Pharaoh's body, and that lapidation, well ordered, produces at a stroke the king, the pyramid and Egypt" (Serres 2015, 22; cf. 161).

Girard's claim that the tomb is the cornerstone of culture accords with the claim of Fustel de Coulanges that in ancient times the "tomb was generally near the house" in order to facilitate worship of the ancestors (Fustel de Coulanges 1980, 28; cf. Harrison 2003, 25) and with Otto Rank's observation that the "tomb" is the "first house" (Rank 1989, 162). It finds in the Neolithic settlement of Çatalhöyük a fascinating and powerful illustration (Nakamura and Meskell 2013, 451–453). This settlement that provided housing for the living people together with the burials of their dead demonstrates the closeness of life and death in early culture: "Çatalhöyük had no special buildings or spaces reserved for burial. Intramural burial was the norm at Çatalhöyük and external areas were used for interment less frequently" (Boz and Hager 2013, 413; cf. Mellaart 1967, 204–209; Andrews, Molleson, and Boz 2005). Çatalhöyük is in this regard not a unique case but finds parallels in different cultures and ages, supporting Girard's claim that the tomb is at the center of human culture. Intramural burials were also found at contemporary Neolithic sites throughout the Near East (Boz and Hager 2013, 413). Hodder refers to the work of the anthropologist Raymond

Firth on Tikopia to underline the fact that burial beneath the floor was not something unique to Çatalhöyük, but could also be discovered at a place that was far removed in time and space (Hodder 2006, 27–28, 109–110; cf. Firth 1936, 1967). Here is Firth's description of such burials at Tikopia:

> It is the custom of these natives – even of practically all the Christians – to bury their dead either within the dwelling-house or beneath the eaves just outside. The body, wrapped in mats and bark-cloth, is interred six feet or so beneath the surface of the soil. Since this is usually of a porous, sandy nature there appears to be no offence to the living and the custom is not so unhygienic as it seems at first hearing. Even with the coming of Christianity there are few cases of churchyard burial, and cemeteries as such have hardly begun to exist. This adhesion to the ancient custom is an indication of the strength of kinship sentiment. The reason given by the natives for it is a sympathetic one – that the grave of the loved one may be the better protected from the force of the weather ... The visitor who enters a dwelling of any great age will see on one side of him a neat row of trapezoidal coconut-leaf mats, of the same type as those which cover the rest of the floor, only a trifle larger. They are arranged more carefully, and in some cases stand a little higher than the general level. Each marks the resting-place of a deceased member of the family, probably an ancestor of some note, and it is the presence of these dead forbears that is the basic reason for the respect paid to that side of the house.
>
> (Firth 1936, 78)

Similar examples could be added. The Amazonian Achuar, for instance, also buried their dead in the house, distinguishing, however, clearly between women and men, contrary to the practice at Çatalhöyük:

> Women and children are simply buried a few feet below the *peak* [a bed made from palm or bamboo slats] where they used to sleep, the only space in the communal dwelling that, in life as in death, belongs to them in particular. For a man it is different. The whole house is his domain; he is its origin and its master and bestows upon it its identity and its moral substance. It accordingly becomes his solitary sepulchre when, having buried his body between the central pillars, the rest of the family abandons the place and is dispersed to the four corners of the kinship group.
>
> (Descola 1996, 378)

Nakamura and Meskell examined the burial assemblage at Çatalhöyük and found that sex was not a primary structuring principle in this settlement (Nakamura and Meskell 2013, 455–458).

Building Sacrifice

The intramural burials at Çatalhöyük and other places prove the centrality of the tomb but do not yet provide sufficient evidence for Girard's

thesis about the victimary mechanism as the cultural origin. There is, however, another widespread ritual institution that is much closer to Girard's hypothesis and also plays an important role in Çatalhöyük: building sacrifice (Hubert and Mauss 1964, 65; Becker 1975, 103; Burkert 1983, 39; Palaver 2013, 177–179). Otto Rank links building sacrifices with foundational myths like those about the city-founders Romulus or Cain, who began their work of construction by murdering their brothers, and concludes that these sacrifices "embody the idea that every created thing, if it is to be capable of life, owes its existence to some life destroyed" (Rank 1989, 199). Glenn M. Schwartz gives a definition of building sacrifice that shows some affinities with Girard's hypothesis:

> Construction or foundation sacrifice consists of the killing of humans or animals for interment in building foundations, attested in East Asia and the Middle East. The rationale for such a practice is often said to be the provision of a solid and stable edifice … In some East Asian cases, this type of sacrifice involves the presentation of an offering, as when the killing is intended to appease a supernatural entity displeased by the building project, but other foundation sacrifices are said to animate the building to protect it and provide a connection to the supernatural world.
>
> (Schwartz 2012, 7)

Sharon Moses discusses the possibility of child sacrifices at Çatalhöyük, explicitly referring in this regard to foundation burials (Moses 2012). And we can also refer with Clare et al. (Chapter 6 this volume) to the early Pre-Pottery Neolithic B site of Nevalı Çori, where "there is evidence for what has previously been referred to as a foundation sacrifice (Bauopfer) … Beneath the floor of House 21 there was found a crouched inhumation, again of a young woman, with a flint point embedded in the neck and lower jaw."

According to Girard's mimetic theory, building sacrifices represent a controlled repetition of the founding murder. Just as the killing of a scapegoat brought unity and peace to the community, all building projects should likewise receive lasting stability through corresponding sacrifice. A ritual sacrifice at the ceremonial beginning of construction can be seen as a repetition of the founding murder. Building sacrifices belong to the world's truly universal phenomena; instances can be found in essentially every culture, on all continents and throughout history. Also mythology and literature are full of examples and references to building sacrifices. Mentioned above are the stories of Romulus and Cain. In the Bible we also encounter Joshua's curse on the person who dares to rebuild the city of Jericho (Joshua 6:26; Kings 1 16:34), showing how this curse came to fruition during the reign of King Achab, and how Hiel of Bethel rebuilt

Jericho: "He laid its foundation at the cost of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke by Joshua son of Nun." This example highlights how often especially children were used for building sacrifices.

Building sacrifices also play an important role at Çatalhöyük: the initial construction of houses was ritually sanctioned, with infant interments at the threshold into the main room and many neonates used during construction (Hodder 2006, 117; Nakamura and Meskell 2013, 453). Hodder refers also to the interesting fact that during the construction of Building I four neonates were buried, although no neonates were buried during the occupation of the building. The importance of foundational burials is also highlighted by the "burials in foundation/construction contexts and near walls hav[ing] the highest proportion of individuals with direct goods (44–48 per cent), followed by platform, floor and midden burials (27–30 per cent), while room fill burials have the least amount (5 per cent)" (Nakamura and Meskell 2013, 453). According to Hodder, infant burials are often associated with foundations. He and Whitehouse describe the importance of rituals at the foundation of houses:

> Foundation rituals associated with the houses would have occurred every 70–100 years, and in some cases they appear to be associated with feasts. There is frequent evidence that house foundation was associated with highly charged events such as the burial of neonates and young children, and the placing of human skulls at the base of house posts. In the case of Building 42, the foundation of the house was accompanied by the burial of a man holding the plastered skull of a woman. The burial of neonates and young children in the foundations of houses perhaps implies involvement with a larger group than the inhabitants of these houses (suggested to be five to eight people per house on average, too small a group to produce a cluster of neonate burials at the time of house foundation). There may, in fact, have been some association between the closure and foundation of a house and the death of significant individuals in the house. The care taken in preparing houses for closure and rebuilding suggests elaborate ceremony and intense focus.
>
> (Whitehouse and Hodder 2010, 129)

The most striking example of a building sacrifice – if this foundational burial is interpreted with the help of Girard's mimetic theory – is the skeleton of an elderly woman aged over fifty holding a plastered female skull in her hands that was excavated in a midden beneath Building 42 in 2004 (Hodder 2006, 24–25, 148, 210, 260; Moses 2012, 65; Boz and Hager 2013, 420, 424; Nakamura and Meskell 2013, 450, 463–464; Carter et al. 2015, 100–102). It was definitely a founding burial because Building 42 was erected on this burial and not on a previous

house. This foundational burial also stands out for the fact that among the burial goods that were found was a leopard claw, the only leopard bone – despite the depiction of leopards in the site's imagery – that has been excavated in Çatalhöyük so far. The fact that new houses placed not on older houses but on midden required foundational burials – especially of neonates and children – resonates very well with the widespread practice of sacrifice that we know from many different cultures and religions. From a Girardian perspective building sacrifices most likely mediated back to a foundational murder that solved an internal crisis of an archaic human tribe through the killing of one of its members. The peace and harmony that resulted from this collective killing is ritually repeated in foundational burials that are also seen as contributing to a harmonious prospering of the house, building, bridge, or dam erected on those burials. Looking at the foundational burial of Building 42 one may wonder why the treatment of this buried body supports "the idea of concern for rather than the ostracizing of the weak and diseased" (Nakamura and Meskell 2013, 450). Doesn't such an observation contradict a ritual connection with the victimary mechanism? Not at all. The victimary mechanism results, according to Girard, in a double transference of bad and good attributions on to the victim (Girard 1987, 37; Palaver 2013, 153). A ritual repetition will often carry on with both attributes or develop in one of these directions. If the original event was in the end experienced as the powerful outbreak of peace and harmony, a ritual repetition will stress a positive attitude towards anyone who follows in the footsteps of the original provider of peace and stability.

Terror Management in Çatalhöyük

Throughout this chapter I have already made many references to Ernest Becker's anthropological reflections on the relationship between death and human culture. We also could observe a certain affinity of his insights to Girard's mimetic theory. Both share a special emphasis on violence and religion. What are Becker's basic assumptions? Sam Keen summarized in his Foreword to Becker's book *The Denial of Death* his thesis about the importance of death anxiety in the following way: "The basic motivation for human behavior is our biological need to control our basic anxiety, to deny the terror of death" (Keen 1997, xii). Society and culture provide us, according to Becker, with a hero-system helping us to overcome death anxiety. Here is how Keen describes Becker's thesis about the role of society in curbing death fear:

> We achieve ersatz immortality by sacrificing ourselves to conquer an empire, to build a temple, to write a book, to establish a family, to accumulate a fortune, to further progress and prosperity, to create an information-society and global free market. Since the main task of human life is to become heroic and transcend death, every culture must provide its members with an intricate symbolic system that is covertly religious.
>
> (Keen 1997, xiii)

Terror management theory is a social psychology based on Becker's basic insights and has developed experiments to prove them. Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon, and Tom Pyszczynski, the three founders of this approach, summarize their basic research:

> Terror management theory posits that the unique awareness of death and tragedy renders human beings prone to debilitating terror, and that this terror is managed by a dual-component anxiety buffer consisting of a cultural worldview and self-esteem. In support of this analysis, experiments have demonstrated that dispositionally high or momentarily raised self-esteem reduces physiological and self-reported anxiety in response to a variety of threats, and that mortality salience produces a host of exaggerated positive responses to those who share or uphold one's cultural worldview, and exaggerated negative responses to those who are different or who violate important aspects of one's own cultural worldview. Although there is surely much more empirical work to be done, results of research to date are clearly in accord with the notion that concerns about death play a leading role in the ongoing drama of human life.
>
> (Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski 1998, 39)

According to terror management theory there are two pillars to respond to the challenge of human mortality: first, the protection of our self-esteem and second, the participation in a shared cultural worldview that often longs for the superiority of one's own group over others. According to terror management theory, experiments showed that a sudden reminder of death easily results in scapegoating and in an increasing enmity against foreigners.

When I started to think about the role of intramural burials at Çatalhöyük, my first assumption was that – following terror management theory to a certain degree – the relative peaceful state of this Neolithic settlement was probably caused by a permanent awareness of death that results from the close cohabitation of living and dead people. According to this initial assumption scapegoating and enmity cannot break out through sudden confrontation with mortality because reminders of death are all over the place. It is true violence does not play a big role at Çatalhöyük (Larsen et al. 2013, 408, 410; Boz and Hager 2013, 437, but see Chapter 4 this volume). But was this significant lack of violence

caused by the ongoing awareness of death? A recent experiment with Hindus in India has shown that people with a high awareness of death – the experiment used funerary workers and priests performing death ceremonies – was no help against a heightened cultural worldview defense (Fernandez et al. 2010). Whereas the control group that was not exposed to death permanently reacted in the typical way, increasing the defense of their own worldview as soon as they were reminded of their mortality, the group with a high exposure to death had a chronically high level of worldview defense, too. This experiment suggests that death awareness forces people to cling strongly to their cultural hero-system, helping them to keep death anxiety at bay.

My initial interpretation is most likely wrong. But maybe the basic assumptions of Becker and terror management theory are wrong, too. Is it really true that people fear death in general? Boz and Hager seem to suggest that the people at Çatalhöyük had a quite relaxed relationship with death:

> The contextual evidence of the intramural burials at Çatalhöyük and the pre-interment treatment of the body suggest that people were familiar, at ease, and potentially at peace with the concept of the dead. Sharing a house floor and repeatedly witnessing the dead at different stages of decomposition were part of their daily life. Therefore, "fear" does not appear to be a part of a relationship that the people of Çatalhöyük felt for their dead.
>
> (Boz and Hager 2013, 438)

It seems to be true that death anxiety is not really openly visible in Çatalhöyük. But this should not be taken as a proof that people at this Neolithic site were not affected – at least indirectly – by death anxiety at all. Such a claim would separate these people definitely from the rest of humanity. Surely these people were not haunted by death anxiety as human beings are in the modern world. But why should they have cared so much about the dead if death was not also a real challenge for them? The burials are not disposals of corpses that were just left behind while the living were moving forward with their lives. The burials show a special concern for the dead. They even attributed to their dead special power so that one can ask whether this was part of a social hero-system that helped these people to cope with death. For the attribution of power we can just refer to the foundational burial of Building 42 in which the buried woman was given power by the skull she embraced, or by the leopard claw that was one of her burial goods and stands for all the power and deadliness of a dangerous predator (Hodder 2006, 25;

Nakamura and Meskell 2013, 463). If we want to understand the relative peacefulness and their seeming ease with death at Çatalhöyük, we have to look at the cultural worldview that characterized these dwellers. Could ritual hunting be understood as a form of fight against death anxiety in the sense of Maurice Bloch's "rebounding violence" (Bloch 1992, 2010)? Was Çatalhöyük immersed in a cultural immortality worldview that was able to keep violence at a low level?

Where Ernest Becker was reflecting on possibilities to overcome destructive types of heroism that follow most cultural means to curb death anxiety, he was recommending a heroism of sainthood that opens up to the whole cosmos as it was given by the Creator, and he mentions Saint Francis of Assisi as an example of this heroism (Becker 1975, 163). In regard to being close to nature and acting out a low level of destructiveness, the people at Çatalhöyük were most likely closer to Saint Francis than are we modern exploiters of our world. According to Becker, archaic cultures were also able to give human beings a sense of contributing to cosmic life by being immersed in the world of the sacred (Becker 1975, 186, 206, 209; 1997, 5; 2005, 221–222). Contrary to Saint Francis, however, archaic people did not have a strong notion of personal individuality. Additionally, we can also seek with Becker a "moral equivalent to war" that may govern a group or culture (Becker 1975, 126, 145; cf. Keen 1997, xiv). The people at Çatalhöyük were most likely united not by fighting outside enemies or scapegoating outsiders among them, but by their hunting rituals and by a cult of the dead that immersed each individual in a hero-system that connected them via their house with the ancestors and kept death fear at bay.

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4

A Girardian Framework for Violent Injuries at Neolithic Çatalhöyük in Their Western Asian Context

Christopher J. Knüsel, Bonnie Glencross, and Marco Milella

History is Militarized and Politicized, while Prehistory is Ritualized

The study of the prehistoric origins and development of violence is obscured by a tendency to treat evidence for ritual practices and violence as unrelated phenomena that are thus rarely integrated as a social process in archaeological discourse. René Girard (1972) argued that violence was a fundamental part of the founding of primordial religions and is thus inextricably linked through the ritual surrounding a sacrificial victim, a scapegoat, whose killing formed a cathartic release of social tensions within early communities. The motivations for group participation in these events came from a desire to mimic, to imitate, to emphasize individual membership in the group and partake in the unity created by a situation of all against one, or as Jean-Pierre Dupuy (Chapter 10, this volume) describes it, "a mob on the rampage and the collective killing of a surrogate victim, followed by its ritual repetition in the form of a sacrifice." These ritualized events acted to rejuvenate social relations among members within early communities. Violence and ritual are in this way tethered through the social function of ritual to create social cohesion within a group.

In a related vein, Whitehouse and Lanham (2014) argue that ritualized behavior is linked to a psychological proclivity to imitate trusted others, and this propensity leads to the performance of collective rituals to increase group cohesion that can be extended not only to group members but to larger groups who share imagined group affiliations and social identities. These rituals thus act to "bolster the social order." Both big

game hunting and warfare rely on means "to produce intense, kin-like cohesion" (Whitehouse and Lanham 2014, 682) that motivates people to partake in dangerous activities that include violent confrontations between people and animals (hunting) and other people (interpersonal violence). They define ritual as based on synchronic movement, causally opaque action, and both euphoric (an intense feeling of excitement and wellbeing) and dysphoric (a state of unease or distress) arousal. This would include collective participation in violence within the community and also externally in the larger and sustained hostilities that define warfare. Only scalar differences separate violence from warfare, but both are highly ritualized. They require coordinated body movements in order to employ weapons and coordination among individuals in preparation for and in hunting and combat-related maneuvers.

Given the unquestionable link between funerary deathways and ritual activity implicit in the act of burial, the lack of synthesis between ritual acts and violence masks variation in the funerary record and other circumstances – beyond ritual ones – that result in deposits of human remains. This is implicit in the way the word "burial" is invoked in archaeological discourse, which as Martin Smith (2015, personal communication) notes, includes all of the following: a grave containing a corpse, the buried corpse itself, the act of burying a corpse, as well as the act of burying something else. Archaeologists often speak colloquially of "burials" to refer to any deposit of human bone, even in the absence of explicit consideration of the evidence to support this assessment. As a result, even in the absence of evidence for a prepared grave, the deposition of human remains is ascribed to the performance of funerary rites and deposits of human remains are ascribed to an *a priori* ritual intent, even if formal burial may not have occurred. This interpretive tension is made poignantly clear in the continuing discussion of the earliest evidence for burial in the Middle Palaeolithic (see Gargett 1989, 1999; Rendu et al. 2014, 2016; Dibble et al. 2015), where funerary practices remain a question of importance for the development of human cognition, in addition to being of phylogenetic significance for modern *Homo sapiens* and their relationship to evolutionary predecessors. The fine-grained study of the deposits in which Palaeolithic human remains are found (with detailed recording of features and taphonomic studies of both the archaeological context and of human remains, together with site interpretation) is rarely attempted in such detail in other periods, including in later periods of prehistory and protohistory when funerary rites are highly variable. If applied as cavalierly in a medico-legal situation, murder

victims abandoned or clandestinely deposited would be termed "burials" within a funerary tradition, and mass graves would be seen as evidence for a tradition of "multiple or collective burial."

Although much highlighted recently (Knüsel and Smith 2014b; Knüsel and Robb 2016), this situation continues owing to divisions in the discipline based on time period specializations and a pervasive concept of burial norms that sees peoples (in practice, these are largely regional artifact distributions in most cases) equated with burial traditions. These traditions are based on burial modes or types, such as burials beneath tumuli, rather than on the patterns in which human remains are found, which are considerably more varied. Thus abandoned bodies – those denied funerary rites – are conflated with those receiving such rites. The latter must be demonstrated, not assumed. The dead from conflict are in this way disguised beneath a ritualized veneer and violence is not incorporated as a driving force in social change in the prehistoric past. This contrasts with historical treatments that interpret such events as pivotal (see Fiorato et al. 2000 for an example). As a consequence, the origins and roots of violence and warfare are obscured, despite evidence for burnt structures, weapons and defensive architecture, abandoned settlements, depopulations of regions and migrations, and, most importantly, traumatic skeletal injuries. Even though seen as pivotal in historic periods, violence and warfare have not been integrated in discussion of social change in prehistory owing to conceptual problems and poor integration of human remains analyses in archaeological discourse. This type of confusion has clear implications for the understanding of a variety of human proclivities, including full appreciation of funerary practices and the development of violence and warfare in the human past.

Neolithic Çatalhöyük presents multiple lines of evidence traditionally considered indicative of violence and warfare. At Çatalhöyük, the absence of streets and the closely packed buildings that were entered through the roof meant that the layout of the houses would make moving from one part of the site to another difficult for people unfamiliar with the internal organization. James Mellaart (1967, 68) attributed these building styles to a need for defense and as a measure against flooding, drawing favorable comparisons with more recent villages found in eastern and central Anatolia, the Caucasus, and western Iran. As Mellaart noted, any breach of a wall would permit access to only a single isolated room from which the ladder could be pulled up, isolating intruders within. In an ethnographic context in New Guinea, Roscoe (2008) notes that defenses are designed more to keep attackers in, to delay and confuse them, rather

than to keep them out. This would permit both escape and future retaliation by inhabitants of the site.

In the 1960s James Mellaart interpreted burnt dwellings in Level VIA at Çatalhöyük as evidence for attack. He considered that the entire settlement had perished in what he termed a "conflagration" (Mellaart 1967, 63). More recently, similar burnt structures have been interpreted as a ritual closure event both at Çatalhöyük (Taylor et al. 2015) and at near-contemporary Pre-Pottery Neolithic (PPN) sites in Syria, where there is evidence for widespread burning of buildings (Verhoeven 2000; Akkermanns et al. 2012; Stordeur 2015, 282). Clearly, there has been a shift in interpretation in recent years from events once deemed external to communities to those emphasizing internal ritual behavior. Yet, there is telling evidence in western Asia for violence from earliest times based on the analysis of skeletal remains that suggests possible alternative interpretations for at least some of these occurrences.

Violent Injuries Found in Western Asia: Earliest Evidence

Shanidar 3, Iraq

Since his discovery in the 1960s at Shanidar Cave (Iraq), the Neanderthal male known as Shanidar 3 has been a focus for discussions of interpersonal violence and the use of weapons. Dating to the Middle Palaeolithic (35,000–45,000 years ago), Shanidar 3 shows a penetrating wound on the left ninth rib. Experimental work by Churchill et al. (2009, 163) demonstrates that while the injury could have been sustained as a result of a spear or knife thrust, the lack of major involvement of more than one rib, lack of fracturing of the affected and adjacent ribs, and the lack of bone defects associated with the lesion (such as wastage, hinging, and radiating fracture lines) suggests that the weapon causing the wound was carrying relatively low kinetic energy. Based on the position, angulation, and morphology of the lesion, it is considered to be "most consistent with injury by a low-mass, low-kinetic energy projectile weapon" (Churchill et al. 2009, 163). The projectile would have penetrated deep enough to collapse the lung, making Shanidar 3 one of the oldest/earliest-recognized victims of interpersonal violence.

Qafzeh 11, Israel

The Qafzeh site (Lower Galilee, Israel) has produced the largest Levantine hominin assemblage from the Middle Palaeolithic, *c.* 90,000–100,000

BP (Coqueugniot et al. 2014). Qafzeh 11 is an adolescent, 12–13 years of age at death and of indeterminate sex, exhibiting a healed depressed fracture of the right portion of the frontal bone with additional fracture lines radiating from the area of impact (Coqueugniot et al. 2014; see also image in Wu et al. 2011). Coqueugniot et al. (2014, 8) report that Qafzeh 11 "represents the oldest documented human case of severe cranial trauma in south-western Asia." While the specific circumstances leading to the cranial injury remain unknown, this type of injury is generally considered the result of blunt force trauma. In addition, Qafzeh 11 represents a unique form of burial with evidence for ritual funerary behavior. Qafzeh 11 was found lying supinely in a pit facing right (i.e. with the head turned to the right) and upper limbs flexed. Two deer antlers positioned on the chest showed contact with the individual's hands, suggesting that these antlers were an intentional funerary inclusion resulting from a deliberate funerary act (Coqueugniot et al. 2014; cf. Defleur 1993).

Wadi Mataha, Jordan

The earliest occupation of Wadi Mataha (southern Jordan) dates to 17,579–16,457 cal BP and corresponds with the Epipalaeolithic Geometric Kebaran culture (Stock et al. 2005; Macdonald et al. 2015). Stock et al. (2005, 454) report an adult male skeleton found face down with "hands and feet behind the back" and exhibiting "a large oval hole in the frontal bone [that] may have been the result of perimortem modification" (Figure 4.1). From Figures 9c and d in Macdonald et al. (2015, 117), the appearance of this defect is suggestive of a perimortem fracture. The presence of a bevel on the right side of the ectocranial (i.e. external) surface of the frontal and the "chipping" of the defect margin noted by the authors suggest that this defect may have resulted from penetration of an object from behind; the destruction visible on the right part of the occipital may indicate the entry point of a penetrating object. Stock et al. (2005, 454) note that "no parallels for the burial position" of the Wadi Mataha adult male "have been reported from the Epipaleolithic of the Levant."

The individual was placed in an existing crevice, with no burial pit (Stock 2015, personal communication). The presence of perimortem trauma and absence of a prepared grave feature suggest that this individual was not formally buried but was deposited in a non-funerary mortuary context. The presence of objects, including a denticulated flint blade showing a high degree of technical skill in its manufacture, could

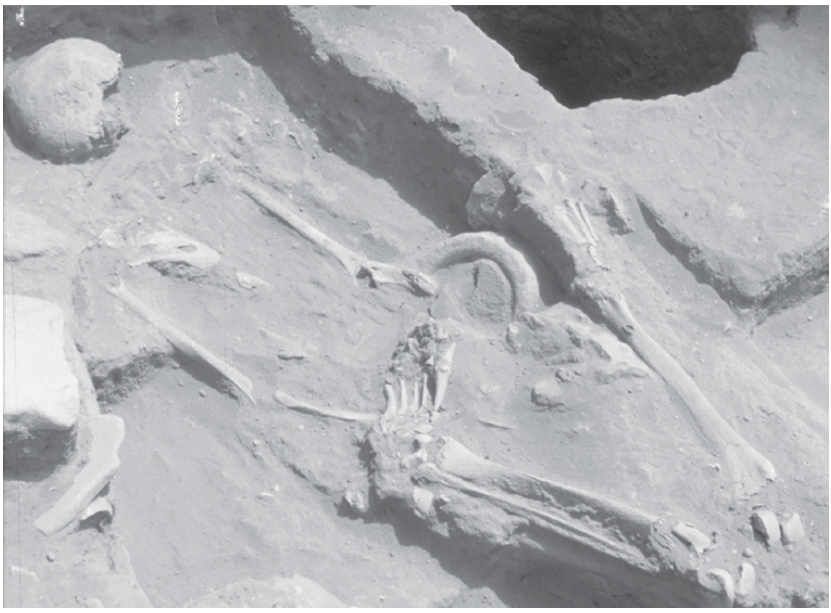

FIGURE 4.1 Prone and "hog-tied" male (Wadi Mataha F-81) from Epipalaeolithic Wadi Mataha, Jordan (Photograph courtesy of Michael Chazan, University of Toronto).

be incidental inclusions or relate to the manner of death of this individual by homicide. The placement of a perforated groundstone bowl between the right *os coxae* and beneath the ulna and radius of the right forearm indicates that it may be the remnants of a device used to restrain the limbs, tighten the binding of them, and control the individual's movement, similar to that employed to transport animals. A lithic flake found within the sacral canal, a position that seems difficult to explain in the context of gradual infilling associated with a primary deposition, is suspicious in this context and again could relate to the manner of death. The site has been interpreted as a hunting camp (Macdonald et al. 2015). This individual's seclusion from settlement sites, as well as the stone slabs placed over the upper parts of the torso and skull (Macdonald et al. 2015), appear to be means to conceal and perhaps restrain the corpse.

The facedown position of this individual is suggestive of a recognized form of deliberate and socially sanctioned treatment for criminals, prisoners, and witches in the past, and meant to denigrate, humiliate, and show contempt (Arcini 2009). Moreover, the hog-tied position is reminiscent of more recent human rights abuse killings. A similar position

seems to be depicted in a roughly 10,000-year-old rock engraving from Addaura Cave in Sicily (Depaepe 2009, 86).

Jebel Sahaba, Sudan

The site of Jebel Sahaba (in northern Sudan) includes an early formal cemetery of the Qadan culture dating to the Epipalaeolithic, at least 11,600 years ago, which contains the remains of forty-six adults and thirteen subadults recovered from single and multiple burials (Antoine et al. 2013). Some 45 percent of the individuals are thought to have perished as a result of inflicted arrow wounds (Wendorf 1968). While many of the burials contain evidence of arrows or other weapons mixed with the bones, some skeletons show embedded chert fragments, suggesting that these people were victims of the earliest documented, large-scale armed conflict (see also Guilaine and Zammit 2000). The early date, the number of individuals involved, and extent of these injuries make this site stand out as one that anticipates later large-scale conflicts.

Jerf el Ahmar, Syria

Jerf al Ahmar is a PPNA/PPNB transitional period site situated on the left bank of the Euphrates River in Syria, 60 km from the border with Turkey, with the Natufian to PPNB site of Mureybet being 40 km to the south (Stordeur et al. 2001). The occupation of Jerf el Ahmar dates to 9500–8700 cal BC, which corresponds with the end of the PPNA Mureybetian period (Aurenche et al. 2001; Stordeur 2015). Stordeur (2015) reports evidence for a small village located on the then banks of the river on two hills separated by an area lacking architecture and containing refuse. Twelve levels of occupation were identified, with all of the most recent levels containing domestic/residential buildings associated with a centrally located, subterranean communal building (*bâtiment communautaire*) that differs in size and internal features from what are considered to have been domestic habitations. The communal buildings are hypothesized to have been multifunctional, used for collective storage, meetings, and ritual performance (Stordeur et al. 2001; Stordeur 2015). All such buildings had been burnt at this site, as indeed had others at near-contemporary sites at Mureybet and Tell'Abr 3 (Akkermans et al. 2012). On the east knoll, one communal building, EA7B, had been built in the same place as the preceding Building E7a after it had been burnt; each of these buildings contained a post-hole into which a human cranium had been deposited. Stordeur (2015) interprets these as foundation deposits.

On the west knoll, houses and the communal building, EA30, had been simultaneously and apparently intentionally burnt in an intense fire, with objects including tools and personal ornaments left in place in some of the burnt buildings. A skeleton lacking the cranium, mandible, and the four superior-most cervical vertebrae lay splayed supinely on the floor of the central room. A layer of burned material covered this skeleton and the left upper limb bears signs of burning (blackening) that indicates burning through to the bone (Stordeur et al. 2001, 37; Stordeur 2015). The body had been covered by roof material that had collapsed in the fire when it was still in *rigor mortis*, as suggested by flexion of the hand phalanges (Stordeur 2015). Stordeur suggests that this individual may represent a sacrificial victim, the body being thrown into the structure, the building burnt, and the elements of the cephalic extremity recovered some time afterwards (Stordeur 2015), an action that would thus represent retrieval of these elements, apparently without the need to cut surrounding soft tissues, as no cutmarks are mentioned. Stordeur (2015, 347, figure 104.1) writes: "Après sa mort le corps d'une jeune fille (d'après J. Anfruns) a été jeté depuis le haut. Au moment de sa chute, le corps était entier. L'incendie a été immédiat, le toit s'est effondré, recouvrant en partie le corps. Le crâne a été enlevé après sa décomposition, au minimum plusieurs mois." The absence of cutmarks on the cervical vertebrae supports the interpretation for a delay in removing the elements of the cephalic extremity after the body had already decomposed. Moreover, the body does not have the pugilistic pose of a fire victim (see DiMaio and DiMaio 2001, 372–374), so this individual does not appear to have been immolated, and its state is thus consistent with the body having been burned incidentally from falling debris.

Two crania, one of an adult, with its associated mandible, and the other of a child, were deposited at an interior corner of the building and amidst remains that had fallen inside, respectively. Neither was associated with the above-described infra-cranial skeleton lacking elements of the cephalic extremity, the treatment and depositional context in EA30 being unique in the archaeological record for the Neolithic in western Asia. While removal of parts of the cephalic extremity is documented, the depositional context remains singularly unique and perhaps suggests a lack of regard for the individual. The meaning behind removal of elements of the cephalic extremity has been interpreted as evidence of either ritualistic ancestor worship or a form of headhunting and tribute-taking (Testart 2008). Similarly, the depositional context could be viewed as the

result of ritual abandonment or the end-result of an attack, headhunting, and burning of targeted buildings or parts of the village.

Owing to the intensity and repeated phenomenon of single burnt buildings, Stordeur (2015, 282–85) interprets these as voluntary acts at Jerf el Ahmar. There is one episode of more general burning of several structures in Level II/E that may suggest a different type of phenomenon, one characterized by signs of intense burning with objects, including basketry and even precious ones, left in place, which suggests the hasty flight of the once inhabitants (Stordeur 2015, 285). All of the communal buildings at the site met the same fate and were burnt. These burnt areas show signs of being leveled and reinhabited after their destruction.

While noting that archaeologists have underestimated the evidence for violence in prehistoric societies, Parker Pearson (2009, 124) sees the Jerf el Ahmar skeleton as a "very convincing indication that life was not entirely peaceful in the PPN Near East," but he questions whether the evidence is sufficient to argue for prolonged warfare in which headhunting was a regular activity. Clearly, though, the general acceptance of a "skull cult" in the prehistoric Near East (cf. Cauvin 1997, 2000) may be based on a conflation of evidence for sacrificial killing, headhunting, and ancestor veneration. Testart (2009) sees these heads as trophies collected from defeated foes, while Cauvin (1997) argues for the primacy of the human head in rituals involving the ancestors. Other researchers see them as cementing or reaffirming social relations among the living over generations (Kuijt 2000). These viewpoints seem at first to be diametrically opposed, one linked to denigration of the deceased and socially disruptive practices and the other to veneration and social cohesiveness. Both may be the case in some instances, as, for example, when the cephalic extremity of a decapitated individual is reclaimed by family or familiars and may, in time, become a venerated relic.

'Ain Ghazal (Jordan) and Mount Carmel (Israel)

The most direct indication of violence comes from embedded projectile points, but the evidence from the prehistoric Levant is, at present, sparse. Rollefson and Kafafi (1996) cite a flint lodged in the cranium of a single individual from the late Pre-Pottery Neolithic levels at 'Ain Ghazal, although they contend that it is unclear whether this represents a case of intentional injury or the result of post-depositional processes. Bocquentin and Bar-Yosef (2004) report an Early Natufian (14,500–13,000 cal BP) projectile, classified as a Helwan lunate, embedded in the seventh or

eighth thoracic vertebra of an adult male from Mount Carmel, which seems more secure evidence for interpersonal violence.

The Deep Prehistory of Violence

Based on his survey of violence in ethnographic and ethnohistoric societies, Keeley's (1996) revisionist view that the origins of violence should be sought in pre-state, not in state-level societies, prompted re-evaluation of the evidence to test this view. In the two decades since the publication of Keeley's work, which was largely bereft of references to human remains, more recent research has presented emphatic evidence to support his thesis: the Neolithic past was not free from violent confrontation. In Neolithic Europe, where the transition to agriculture was once considered a peaceful one, studies of human remains have documented considerable physical evidence of violent injuries (for general overviews, see Schulting and Fibiger 2013; Smith 2014), at times on a scale large enough to produce mass graves (Meyer et al. 2014), violent brutality meted out to entire families (Meyer et al. 2009) and villages (Wahl and König 1987; Teschler-Nicola et al. 1999), and cruel perimortem treatment (Meyer et al. 2015).

The counterclaim that these injuries occur in numbers too small to confirm sustained periods of conflict associated with warfare fails to recognize that even apparently small numbers of skeletal injuries belie an even greater number of injuries that do not affect the skeleton. Only one-third of projectile injuries in a nineteenth-century sample of combatants from the United States government's Indian Wars affected bone (Milner 2005), which is also the case for more recent traumatic injuries received during assaults, in which only 16.6% could be classified as musculoskeletal (Walker 2001, 584). Because a minority of injuries affects bone, those that do will represent only a fraction of those sustained, even before taphonomic factors that obscure more are taken into account. In order to approximate the total number of injuries actually sustained from only those that affected the skeleton, the number would have to be multiplied by three to roughly five times, based on the two studies cited here.

There is still a tendency to explain the presence of traumatic injuries as due to "accidents," even those affecting the bony armature of the head, which is often the target in armed aggression (Knüsel 2014; Schulting and Wysocki 2005; Schulting and Fibiger 2013) and assaults (Hussain et al. 1994). This is largely due to the fact that determining the ultimate cause of injury in ancient skeletal remains is difficult. Causation, when

viewed as proximate and ultimate, suggests different levels of events/factors leading to injury (Lovell 1997). The proximate cause of a skeletal injury, such as a depressed cranial fracture, is easily identified as the result of a blow to the head causing fracture. But the ultimate cause, once removed from the proximate, as in what was responsible for the blow to the head, such as a stone or a club, becomes more difficult to discern. In this instance, the ultimate cause is also a proximate one in that a further ultimate cause concerns whether the blow from a stone or a club was an accident or the result of an intentional assault, which is more difficult to determine. The placement and pattern of injuries, however, can be used to differentiate accidental from intentional violence for the majority of injuries.

Among modern populations, distinct patterns of skeletal injury are recognized that result from violent confrontations (see, for example, Walker 2001). Perpetrators and victims of violent assaults are most often males, although females may also be implicated in both roles. The head and neck are consistently favored targets (Walker 1989, 1997, 2001). Head injuries located above the hat-brim line, the area around which a hat sits on the head, are highly consistent with assault trauma in modern urban populations (Kremer et al. 2008; Kremer and Sauvageau 2009). Types of injuries that are often linked with intentional violence include embedded projectiles, fractures, and cutmarks. When repetition in location and injury type is observed in individuals and collections of skeletons, this suggests that the injury was unlikely to be random or accidental and can be considered consistent with assault trauma. Falls in which the head is struck produce meandering linear fractures from low velocity impacts (DiMaio and DiMaio 2001, 150–151), rather than depressed fractures.

Violence in Neolithic Western Asia

In the first literature-based review of the physical evidence for violence-related injuries in Neolithic western Asia, Glencross and Boz (2014) found evidence for what appears to be small-scale fighting and feuding throughout the Neolithic in the region. The sample of individuals, all of whom had sustained depressed cranial fractures, comprises sixteen males, nine females, and seven skeletons for which sex could not be determined due to the incompleteness of remains. The fractures are largely confined to adults: three in young adults, three in middle adults, five in old adults, with another twenty individuals broadly designated as adults in the

absence of age-related features that could distinguish them with any greater precision. The locations of injuries on the cranium, consisting of six frontal and fifteen parietal injuries, suggest that many were received as a result of face-to-face confrontations. The majority of the injuries identified are blunt force depressed fractures of the cranial vault. This is also the case for the majority of injuries in the prehistoric past before the advent of bladed weapons (see Knüsel and Smith 2014a). These injuries share similar ovoid shapes and many of them are located above the hat-brim line, a position more frequently encountered in injuries due to assault rather than accidents (Kremer et al. 2008).

Owing to their repeated appearance and location it would seem improbable that all of these resulted from accidental trauma. The shape and appearance are consistent with injuries from projectiles – perhaps thrown stones. Just as injuries due to stone-tipped projectiles and shaft weapons are rarely encountered after the advent of metals, in modern clinical medicine injuries due to stones are often considered to be rare or unusual occurrences (Alafacia et al. 2010).

Stones – and especially those used in conjunction with slings – account for many injuries in areas where stones are used in conflict. Lakstein and Blumenfeld (2005) noted that stones and sling-thrown marbles were the third most common mechanism of injuries sustained by soldiers in the Al-Aqsa Intifada, which commenced on September 27, 2000; they were responsible for 9.4% (9 of 96 total injuries requiring hospital treatment) of the injuries sustained. The most often injured area in these individuals were the head, face, and neck, some 54.2% affecting these areas. In the Intifada of 1987–1992, the majority of injuries were due to being struck by stones, among both soldiers and civilians, the number of injuries rising to 62% of injuries (120 of a total of 220), accounting for 1.1% of fatalities, as opposed to 3.7% caused by firearms (Hay and Derazon 1998). Thus, not only do stone projectiles cause injury, they can also result in death.

Evidence for Interpersonal Violence at Çatalhöyük

Angel (1971) was the first to suggest that skeletal evidence, specifically fractures and wounds in remains from Çatalhöyük, were indicative of warfare and interpersonal violence. When summarizing the skeletal evidence, he wrote: "Wounds and injuries … reflect social as well as physical wear and tear: warfare, quarrels, hunting and other accident" (Angel 1971,

91). Fractures indicating falls, he wrote, "are not especially numerous … the categories of parry fractures and some of the head injuries … fit military action or at least minor fighting. This is consistent with the design of the town. Some of the disputes may have been internal, however" (Angel 1971, 96). In a later study, Molleson et al. (2005) observed two splinters of bone embedded in the proximal humerus of skeleton 1481. In this rare example of bone projectile use, it is not clear whether or not this injury was intentional. At present, this represents the only embedded projectile injury in humans found at Çatalhöyük, but a healed obsidian projectile injury was found in an aurochs scapula (Mulville 2015, personal communication; Knüsel 2014, personal observation).

In a later study of trauma in the skeletal remains excavated at the site since 1993, Larsen et al. (2013, 407–410) found that 39 of 166 adults (23.5%) had suffered traumatic injuries (fractures), with subadults being much less frequently affected, at 2.3% (5 of 213 individuals). The elements most commonly affected were the clavicle, ulna, ribs, sacrum/coccyx, and fibula. Males were more often affected by traumatic injuries than were their female counterparts, but not to a statistically significant level. Younger males, though, were significantly more likely to suffer injuries than were any other age and sex group. Although there was no significant difference in the numbers of affected individuals through time, the greatest concentration of these injuries occurred in Middle Period adults, with its peak dating to 6,610–6,250 BC, that period with the highest population size and density of inhabitation.

Although the majority of these injuries could have resulted from accidental injuries, six individuals were identified who had suffered depressed fractures of the cranial vault. These cranial injuries affected males and females in equal number, with predominately middle to older adults affected (five of six, with one young adult male affected). All of these fractures showed evidence of healing, so they had not resulted in death. Four of these six individuals (Sk. 1424, Sk. 2115, Sk. 4615, and Sk. 17485) were interred in multi-burial houses, with Sk. 16513 being the sole individual dating to the Late Period phase (6,410–6,150 BC), and this individual was not found in a house with multiple burials.

The most recent work on cranial injuries suggests that the patterning of cranial trauma at Çatalhöyük is consistent with physical assault (Glencross and Knüsel 2015; Knüsel and Glencross 2016). The frequency of cranial trauma (ranging from 219 to 273 injuries per 1,000 individuals) is relatively high compared with frequencies of infra-cranial trauma,

ranging from 16 to 34 per 1,000 long bones to 2 per 1,000 person-years (Glencross et al. 2007).

To date, Glencross and Knüsel (2015) have identified twenty-five individuals bearing blunt force cranial injuries (Figure 4.2), with two individuals presenting wounds characteristic of penetrating injuries, one by what appears to be projectile trauma (Figures 4.3 and 4.4). These injuries affect thirteen females and ten males, with another two individuals of indeterminate sex. All of those affected are adults, except one adolescent affected. All cranial injuries are either healed or show signs of healing, indicating that the injury was non-fatal. The majority of cranial injuries are located above the hat-brim line; most are located on the parietal bones, predominately on the right side followed by the frontal bone, and most appear to be the result of blunt force trauma, categorized as depressed cranial fractures (Figures 4.5 a–e). Regularity and uniformity among individuals in fracture location, type, and shape – elliptical or oval – as well as the fact that all cranial injuries are non-fatal, suggests that these injuries may have occurred in similar circumstances. While the frequency of males and females affected by cranial trauma is roughly equal, females show some of the highest number of fractures. In women these injuries predominate on the posterior and superior surfaces of the cranial vault, positions suggesting that these individuals were not facing their assailants when struck, and that they may have been hit from above. Also of interest, cranial trauma is found only in adults, with the exception of a single adolescent of approximately fifteen years of age at death. Owing to the healed nature of the injuries, it is difficult to know when or at what age the assault occurred in adults, but that an adolescent is affected suggests that at least some subadults were at risk of being exposed to physical assault.

Several individuals show more than a single instance of cranial trauma and appear to have been recidivists (i.e. experiencing repeated or multiple events during which traumatic injury is sustained). The number of injuries exhibited by any given individual ranges from one to as many as five. Of the total number of adults examined to date, twelve of the ninety-three (13%) were cranial injury recidivists (i.e. those with more than two injuries), showing from two to as many as five injuries, with females being more frequently among recidivists than males. These repeated injuries provide evidence for more than a single injury sustained in one incident, or that they were sustained in repeated incidents. Similar states of healing mean that these scenarios cannot be distinguished.

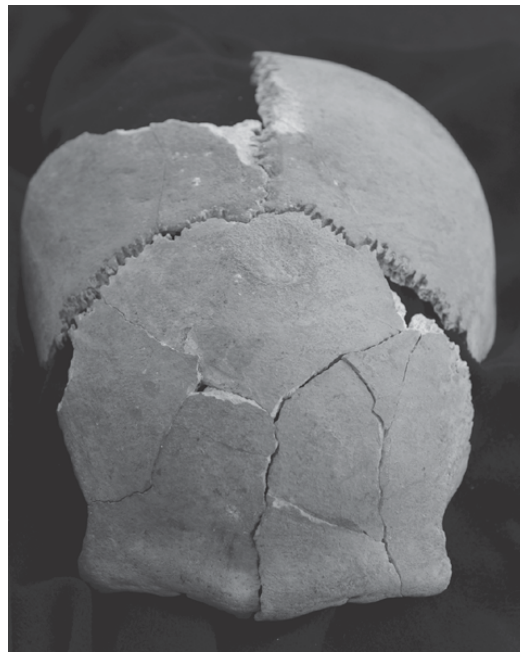

FIGURE 4.2 A healed blunt force traumatic injury of the frontal bone just anterior to the coronal suture in Sk.17485, a middle adult male from Neolithic Çatalhöyük.
(*Source*: the authors)

A Girardian Perspective on Violence at Neolithic Çatalhöyük

René Girard (1972) posited that periodic acts of violence avoided the inflationary spiral of reprisal killings that would erupt in early societies from the killing or injury of a group member in the absence of police forces, developed judicial systems, and formalized laws. This reasoning is consistent with the sporadic, yet continual evidence for non-accidental violence that has been found in recent analyses of skeletal trauma. A synthetic approach to the evidence for skeletal injuries in the funerary record identifies a second major tenet of Girard's theory. Girard (1972, 149) discusses the use of a scapegoat to maintain peace within the community.

The term "scapegoat" is clearly an interpretative abstraction as there may be no single archaeological context that can act as a defining feature of the concept across time and space. Thus, one must seek a combination

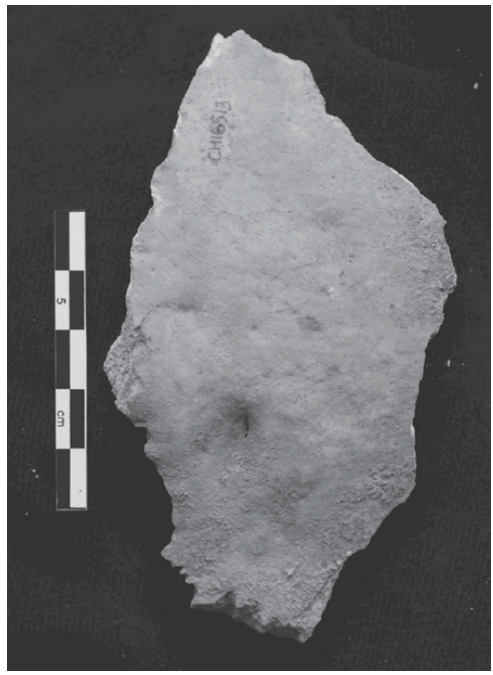

FIGURE 4.3 Ectocranial view (external surface of cranial vault) of a healed penetrating traumatic injury of the posterior left parietal in Sk. 16513, an adult male from Neolithic Çatalhöyük.
(*Source*: the authors)

of traits in order to suggest examples of this behavior, which has a clear legacy in historical and anthropological discourse (Girard 1972; Bremmer 1983). Bremmer (1983) notes that the evidence for scapegoating – heaping all evil, all blame, on a single target and then banishing/exiling or killing the so-laden recipient – was common in the ancient Greek world, with a legacy that stretches back to biblical times, and is still found in modern societies. This was a regular practice, but especially prominent in times of crisis. It involves the selection of an individual, a criminal, a slave, young men and women, a stranger, often an "ugly person" (p. 301), a common person maltreated by nature (p. 303), for sacrifice to avert evil and assuage riled deities in times of social stress, in famines or drought, for example. In this manner, the death of one marginalized person is considered to preserve the lives of the other members of the community. To achieve this end, such persons could be thrown over cliffs, burned, stoned, or exiled. These punishments need not necessarily result

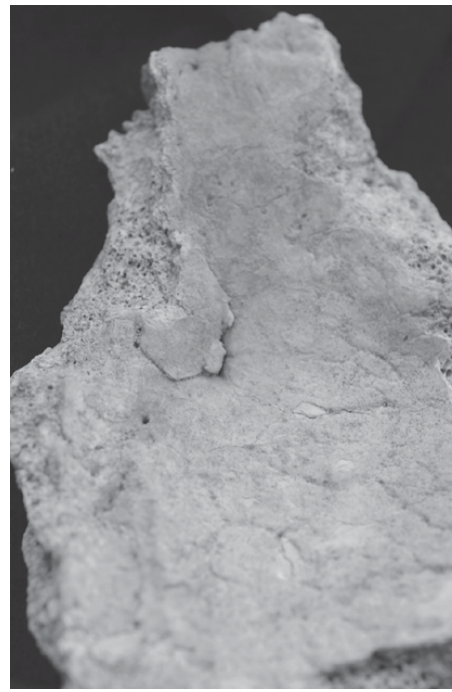

FIGURE 4.4 Close-up of the endocranial surface of the penetrating injury of Sk. 16513, an adult male from Neolithic Çatalhöyük. This lesion remains attached to the endocranial surface with signs of reactive bone indicative of healing. (*Source*: the authors)

in fatality, being intended as threatening, rather than fatal. It seems that the goal of stoning, for example, was to chase a person from the midst of the community (Bremmer 1983). It was intended to make an impression (*imponier*) – to dissuade. Therefore, people who were stoned might survive this ordeal.

All community members took part in stoning, and this meant that the group could be redefined and rejuvenated as an entity. Presumably, as well, no single person could be held responsible for the punishment, or the death of the individual should that transpire intentionally or unintentionally. This event then ushered in a renewal of community membership with the evil expiated, at least until the next crisis gripped the community or the commencement of the next ritual cycle. There is a close parallel to this notion in the stoning of "witches" in archaeological and ethnohistoric contexts in the American prehistoric Southwest (Darling 1999; Ogilvie and Hilton 2000) and Europe (Arcini 2009). In modern Papua

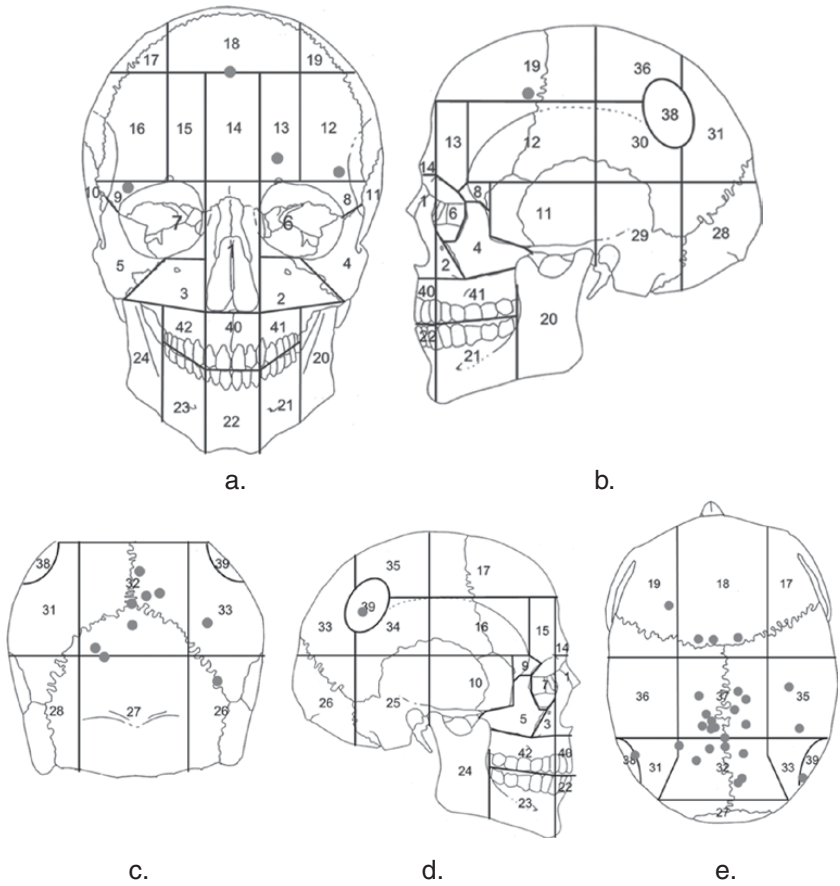

FIGURE 4.5. (a) Injuries of the anterior cranial vault. (b) Injuries of the left parietal. (c) Injuries of the posterior cranial vault. (d) Injuries of the right parietal. (e) Injuries of the superior surface of the cranial vault. Each dark dot represents an injury. The majority of injuries are distributed above the hat-brim line. The cranial zones follow those used by Hussain et al. (1994) in their medico-legal study of assault trauma in modern populations.
(*Source*: the authors)

New Guinea, where deaths may be attributed to the actions of witches (Schieffenhövel 2001), witchcraft accusations and associated violence increase during periods of rapid social change (Stewart and Strathern 2002, 90–107).

Some of the features noted to describe scapegoats are also those that have been used to define "deviant" or "irregular" burials in archaeological

contexts, those that differ from the more commonly encountered funerary ritual norms or a more predominant burial mode in a particular region, place, or period (Aspöck 2008; Milella et al. 2015). Some of the features defining irregular burials include the presence of physical injuries, unusual positions of the skeletal remains, unusual depositional circumstances, uncommon funerary inclusions, and evidence for binding of the deceased that may reflect a standard funerary treatment in some instances but are abnormal, unique, or rare in others and might relate to captivity or restraint.

By combining the anthropological, historical, and archaeological evidence of scapegoating, a working definition of the scapegoat can be created. An individual so treated would be expected to be in the minority and to have singular treatment and depositional context. They should be buried alone to differentiate them from the mass grave, the pre-eminent indicator of the mass armed violence of warfare. They should demonstrate evidence for a lack of "respect" in their deposition, be different from the norm for a region, period, or time. Ideally, they should have evidence for traumatic injuries or a suggestion of trauma (to attempt to address forms of trauma that do not affect the skeleton, such as suffocation or strangulation, which may affect the disposition of the cephalic extremity, such as unusual placement, dislocation of cervical vertebral joints and cranium, or physiologically aberrant positions of the neck and head). The site of burial should be unique and such individuals may demonstrate lack of treatment or extremes in elaboration, the difference depending on the circumstances of death.

Irregular Burials: The Palaeolithic Evidence

The description of a burial as non-normative or irregular is necessarily linked to knowledge about the "normal" funerary patterns for a certain archaeological period and region. As such, archaeological perspectives on irregular burials become diachronically more detailed, in parallel with an increase in quantity and quality of archaeological data, historical documentation, and appearance and development of complexly structured funerary practices. Probably also for these reasons work on irregular burials has usually focused on historical contexts (e.g. Reynolds 2009; Gregoricka et al. 2014; Milella et al. 2015), with only few exceptions from prehistoric contexts.

A suite of features characterizing some burials dating to the Upper Palaeolithic are intriguing since they document complex behaviors

aimed at selected individuals perceived as "special" (Pettitt 2011). In particular, an interesting Upper Palaeolithic pattern is the apparent complex funerary treatment provided to individuals characterized by various pathological conditions (Formicola and Buzhilova 2004; Formicola 2007). The clearest examples of this association come from Sunghir (Russia), Dolní Věstonice (Czech Republic), and Romito (Italy).

The double burial of Sunghir (27,000–23,000 BP) (Pettitt and Bader 2000; Kuzmin et al. 2004;Dobrovolskaya et al. 2012) is the most spectacular funerary assemblage of the Upper Palaeolithic. It consists of two subadults, once considered to have been of opposite sex although a recent genetic study shows both to have been males (Sikora et al. 2017), placed supinely head to head (a unique case for the Upper Palaeolithic, if not for all of prehistory). The younger of the two, around ten years of age at death, presents a shortening and antero-posterior bowing of both femora, suggesting the presence of a congenital condition, possibly related to a diabetic mother (Formicola and Buzhilova 2004; Formicola 2007). Extraordinary features of this burial are the unusual position of the inhumed individuals, their young age at death, and the quantity and quality of associated grave goods, which include among other items, thousands of mammoth ivory beads, hundreds of drilled arctic fox canines, spears made from mammoth tusks, and an adult human femur packed with ochre. This evidence is consistent with considerable productive effort, elaborate funerary rites, and, indirectly, a potentially heightened social status (Pettitt 2011, 208).

The Dolní Věstonice triple burial dating to 26,750–25,890 BP (Svoboda et al. 2002) consists of three young adults, two males and a third individual, originally described as female (Klima 1987) but for whom sex has been variously attributed owing to deformation of the pelvis (Formicola 2007). This individual exhibits skeletal and dental changes: shortening and anterior bowing of the right femur, *coxa vara*, elongated fibulae, bowing of the right humerus and left radius, shortening of the left forearm, and diffuse enamel hypoplasia, all of which are consistent with a diagnosis of skeletal dysplasia and, perhaps more specifically, with *chondrodysplasia calcificans punctata*, complicated by fractures (Formicola et al. 2001; Trinkaus et al. 2001). Unusual features in this case are the number of buried individuals (three), their position in the burial (one male prone, another with the hands positioned in the pubic region of the centrally placed pathological individual), the presence of ochre associated with the skeletal remains, and perhaps the remains of a

wooden pole transfixing the pelvis of one of the males (Klima 1987), as well as a possible close kinship of the three individuals (Alt et al. 1997).

The Romito double burial (11,150 ± 150 BP) (Frayer et al. 1987; Frayer et al. 1988) includes an old female and a late adolescent male, the latter showing a suite of skeletal changes (shortening of long bones, disproportionate shortening of especially forearm bones and femora compared respectively with humeri and tibiae, hampered extension of the left elbow joint, retarded growth of the spheno-basilar region, bossing of both frontal and parietal bones, a high cranial index (a round cranium), and depressed superior nasal region) consistent with acromesomelic dysplasia, a form of dwarfism. Extraordinary features of this burial include the position of the adolescent, apparently held in the left upper limb of the adult, and the cave in which the burial is located, one of the few in Italy presenting some form of cave art. This suggests a magico-ritual characterization of the site, or, more generally, a complex socio-cultural scenario (Formicola 2007) in which Romito Cave played a prominent role. Other possible Upper Palaeolithic examples of pathology-complex funerary treatments also come from Arene Candide (Italy) and Brno (Czech Republic) (Formicola et al. 2001).

Discussing the Dolní Věstonice triple burial, Taylor (2002) stresses the apparent simultaneous inhumation of the three adults, their young age at death, the location of the burial, and its specifically unique features, postulating an event of public killing. According to this interpretation, the triple burial would be related to a process of scapegoating in a context of enhanced social tension. The latter may have been linked to behaviors of the individuals themselves, or to their physical features. Formicola (2007) posits a similar hypothesis, noting that the high frequency of Gravettian and Epigravettian multiple burials and their demographic composition raise the possibility of sacrificial practices.

In addition to specific interpretations, it is worth noting that burials, even if documented, are a relatively rare finding during the early Upper Palaeolithic, especially when compared with the high prevalence of isolated skeletal elements and with the subsequent appearance of more highly visible funerary behaviors during the late Upper Palaeolithic/Epipalaeolithic. This pattern is consistent with inhumation not being the common funerary treatment at this time, but rather a procedure performed only exceptionally, possibly for selected individuals (Pettitt 2011). As such, burials themselves would have been a form of irregular practice. This observation makes the link between complex funerary treatment and pathological individuals even more intriguing, and tends

to exclude a simple casual association between the two types of evidence. In particular, it is possible to interpret the pathological conditions affecting these individuals as the reason underlying the peculiarity of their burial. This hypothesis would suggest a complex social dimension, possibly intertwined with magico-ritual beliefs related to altered physical appearance, behavior, and/or specific manner of death (cf. Formicola 2007). It is also important to note that pathological conditions were unlikely to be confined solely to the skeleton, but also included disease-related anomalies of the soft tissues that perhaps also influenced the mental state of the individuals, a factor that must be taken into account when discussing the social impact of diseases as observed on the skeleton (cf. Formicola 2007). In any case, it seems that at least since the Upper Palaeolithic the presence of pathological states affecting the appearance of an individual directly influenced their social persona/identity in a way that influenced funerary treatment and type of burial.

A Potential Scapegoat at Çatalhöyük

For the period 7100–6000 cal BC, the vast majority of primary burials at Neolithic Çatalhöyük are recovered from beneath house floors, with burials in external spaces extremely rare. Based on anthropological and archaeological criteria, Skeleton (Sk.) 3368 is identified as liminal, relegated to social space outside that reserved for members that share in the affiliations and identity of the community. Sk. 3368 was excavated in 1998 from an external midden (an area usually used for refuse disposal) within Feature 285 in Space 115, which was located between Building 4 and the opposing Buildings 6, 7, and 21, in Level South L (Farid 2007), 7100–6700 cal. BC, based on recent unpublished phasing of the site. He remains the only adult recovered from such a context to date, with the only others being a child of around three years of age at death and two neonatal infants. He was in a hyperflexed position on his left side, with the hands and feet in close proximity, which gave the impression of some form of binding, with the upper torso folded on to the abdomen and the forehead touching the knees (Figure 4.6a and b). He shows bony changes consistent with polyostotic fibrous dysplasia, a debilitating and potentially disfiguring condition (Milella et al. 2016). Based on a spatially separate place of burial and a debilitating and potentially disfiguring pathological condition, this individual appears to have been singled out for unusual funerary treatment. Moreover, he is the only male with multiple (more than two) healed depressed cranial fractures (Knüsel and

FIGURE 4.6 (a) Sk. 3368 in its burial context upon excavation in Feature 285, Space 115, in the midden between Building 4 and Buildings 6, 7, and 21 in the South Area of the site. (b) Plan drawing of Sk. 3368 (Courtesy of Çatalhöyük Research Project).

Glencoss 2016). His cranial vault shows three ovoid depressed cranial fractures, the result of multiple injuries that may indicate at least one but as many as three separate events (the injuries are healed to the same extent, precluding distinguishing between these possibilities). That Sk. 3368 had sustained multiple injuries, and that these were directed to the mid-line and concentrated more to the left side than the right side, accords with a number of the combined criteria that support that these injuries occurred as a result of assault (see Kremer and Sauvageau 2009; Guyomarc'h et al. 2010).

On the basis of the injuries meted out to Sk. 3368 and evidence for a disfiguring affliction, the traumatic injuries may very well represent the result of socially mediated reactions to the appearance and, less easily observed, the behavior of this individual. His cranial injuries may well represent evidence of repeated acts of scapegoating of an individual considered to violate social norms at Çatalhöyük. In combination with other cranial injuries, this evidence suggests enduring social tensions and internal violence at the site. The evidence also suggests the possibility that scapegoating of "different" individuals helped to avert wider social violence.

Throwing Stones, Sling stones, and Clay Balls

Projectile weapons played an important role in prehistory. Slings and sling stones are amongst the oldest and most widespread of tools for

herding animals and hunting birds, but they are also deadly effective as weapons (Isaac 1987). The bow emerged sometime later but also has a well-established antiquity in the Palaeolithic (Shea 2006). More indiscriminate projectile injuries, those that could inflict multiple injuries as a result of their massed use, would have preceded or accompanied those delivered by handheld weapons. The latter are more often associated with face-to-face confrontation and a warrior ethos. Their appearance, then, would have considerable importance for social organizational complexity.

In their world survey of sling stones, which they demonstrate have often been overlooked as weapons, York and York (2011) suggest that sling stones may be distinguished from throwing stones based on their size. Throwing stones are usually bigger, weighing 200–500 g, whereas sling stones are smaller, ranging from 20 g to as much as 330 g in the Balearic Islands, with a naval sling stone from Tahiti weighing up to as much as 1 kg. The overlap here and alterations in the sling leave such distinctions inconclusive, but conical shapes seem to be indicative of sling stones (see Rosenberg 2009). Isaac (1987) notes a range for ethnographically recorded throwing stones in Buganda (Uganda) of 170–1900 g with diameters of 50–210 mm. Baked clay missiles ranging in size from 220 g to 400 g were used to scare game from crop fields.

In a rare study of cranial injuries in a stone projectile-using society, the medical practitioner C. S. Judd (1970) reported that twelve of twenty compound depressed fractures he treated in Western Samoa were due to stoning, the other eight injuries being caused by accidents such as coconuts falling from trees on to people's heads. The injuries he treated ranged in size from 3.0 cm to 6.5 cm. In a preliminary assessment of the sizes of cranial injuries from Neolithic Çatalhöyük, the mean sizes of lesions ranged between 16.6 mm and 25 mm in their smallest and largest dimensions, with a maximum size between 52 mm and 150 mm and a minimum of 2 mm. Thus the Çatalhöyük lesions are more variable but in the general range of those recorded by Judd.

James Mellaart (1967) interpreted clay balls found at Çatalhöyük as sling ammunition (Figure 4.7). The use of the sling is also attested in wall art that features a purported slinger (Mellaart 1967, plate 46, p. 95). It is thus perhaps illustrative that Mellaart's slinger also carries a club, examples of which – usually described as "maces" – have also been found in a variety of materials, some with wooden or bone handles (Mellaart 1964) (Figure 4.8), and some apparently ritually burned (Carter et al. 2008). In the past, thrown stones were used to disable while clubs were

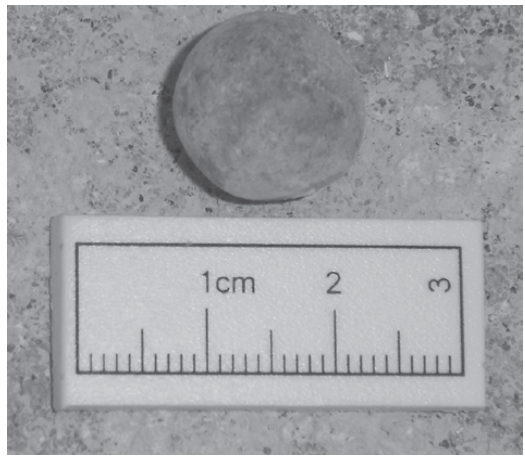

FIGURE 4.7 Clay balls, Neolithic Çatalhöyük, objects that when thrown or propelled could create elliptical blunt force injuries (Photograph courtesy of Jason Quinlan, Çatalhöyük Research Project).

FIGURE 4.8 Groundstone mace-head found in burial Sk. 30007 from Neolithic Çatalhöyük, an object capable of producing elliptical blunt force injuries. (Photograph courtesy of Jason Quinlan, Çatalhöyük Research Project)

then employed to deliver the *coup de grace*. More recently, these ubiquitous clay balls have been interpreted as boilers due to clusters of them being found near ovens in the central rooms of buildings (Atalay 2005; Hodder 2006). At the same time, these clusters are also located at the foot of the ladder in these dwellings, which would place them in a handy location for being thrown once taken up or passed up to the roofs of houses. In size and shape these objects are similar to the later in date Chalcolithic and Pottery Neolithic sling stones found in the southern Levant described and measured by Rosenberg (2009), one of the few published studies of 365 such objects. Similar objects are found in Pottery Neolithic and Chalcolithic sites throughout the Levant, southeast Turkey, and Mesopotamia.

Rosenberg's (2009) biconical examples from the southern Levantine Late Neolithic/Chalcolithic Wadi Rabah culture, which resemble later Byzantine and Roman sling stones and which he believes represent a technological innovation in the region, range in size from 39 mm to 76 mm, with an average of 54.2 mm and standard deviation of 6.6 mm, but an absolute range of less than 40 mm, despite some being double the size of others. In diameter, they range from 21 mm to 44 mm, with a mean of 31.4 mm and standard deviation of 4.2 mm, 63% within 30–39 mm and 98.5% fall within 21–41 mm width range. Some 97% of the stones are within the 40–69 mm length range. Their weight range is 10–400 g, with an average of 69.3 g and standard deviation of 35.8 g, but more than 80% weigh between 40 g and 99 g with an apparent preference for stones weighing 40–69g; only 6.8% are lighter than 40g and 15.1% of these weigh between 90 and 105g. Some fifteen stones weigh 110–160 g and two weigh 400 g each.

Cricket balls and baseballs fall within the range of sling stones in size and weight, being in the heavier part of the range, 140 g and 160 g, respectively. Thus, it may be that some of Rosenberg's (2009) stones also could have functioned as throwing stones. These stones appear at a time when there seems to have been an increased emphasis on herding of animals. Their location in relatively small areas in proximity to two village sites, Kabri and Harorea, suggests that this is where they were often used. Rosenberg (2009) suggests that these areas near the villages were the venue for potential conflicts between rival village communities that may have arisen over pasture, agricultural fields, and women, who formed an increasingly important part of the community that fueled an increase in population in the Neolithic, but also contributed to the increased demands for labor that came with tending and preparing domesticated plants for harvesting and consumption.

At Çatalhöyük, recent analysis of the larger clay balls undertaken by Lucy Bennison-Chapman (personal communication) shows that these objects range in weight from 79.4 g to 712.1 g, with an average of 348.33 g. Diameters range from 4.3 cm (*c.* 13.5 cm in circumference) to 9.2 cm (*c.* 28.9 cm in circumference), with an average of 7.05 cm (*c.* 22.15 cm in circumference). For comparison a cricket ball has a circumference of *c.*22.4–22.9 cm and a baseball *c.* 22.86–23.5 cm. These dimensions are similar to those of larger sling stones and throwing stones, a potential function for clay balls that should not be excluded. The round symmetry of these objects would certainly improve their aerodynamic qualities when compared with unshaped projectiles.

Not only do stone projectiles cause injuries, but they can also result in death (Lakstein and Blumenfeld 2005). Thus, although stones are not as often fatal, their use does produce serious injuries requiring specialist medical treatment in modern circumstances. Their use by well-trained slingers as employed in the ancient world can be expected to have produced much higher casualties and fatalities due to their force of impact being like that of firearms, becoming especially deadly when used from an elevated position, thus being a preferred weapon for indirect fire in sieges of fortified places and against mounted warriors, with horses and even elephants being repelled by them (Dohrenwend 2002). That the injuries identified at Çatalhöyük did not kill their recipients when they certainly could have done so provides compelling insight into funerary pactices (such individuals were in the main not excluded from intramural house burial beneath platforms) and also the potential social circumstances in which these injuries were sustained, a topic which requires further consideration. Actualistic experiments are required to match projectile size and shape with cranial lesions in the future.

Conclusion

In his address delivered in June 2008 to the COVAR (Colloquium on Violence and Religion) at Riverside, California, USA, René Girard succinctly summed up the place of violence in the Neolithic Near East:

> Talking about brutality and violence in the Neolithic is perceived as incorrect or out of fashion; which is why there is such an emphasis on the artistic aspects of their [the inhabitants of Çatalhöyük] culture and the constant search for matriarchal elements.
>
> (quoted in Hodder 2006, 39)

This perspective, from an outside observer of the discipline, is a fair assessment. This is borne out by the responses received when Alain Testart (2008) proposed that decapitated skeletons at Çatalhöyük represent headhunting and not ancestor worship, the dominant interpretation of these occurrences:

> … skull removal was part of a dynamic social process with a focus on the construction of social memory.
>
> (Kuijt 2009, 119)

> … there is no evidence that could clearly be interpreted as the fingerprints of violence … all detectable cuts and/or detachment of certain parts have been associated to the removal of the skull.
>
> (Özdoğan 2009, 121–122)

> Tyranny of the ethnographic record … perhaps the Çatalhöyük example simply represents yet another, though extinct variant?
>
> (Belfer-Cohen and Goring-Morris 2009, 107–108)

> … there is no clear evidence from the skeletons themselves that would argue against the removal of heads at Çatalhöyük as part of rites linked to ancestors. In the meantime it is worth considering whether there is any evidence at all for warrior society at the site, or even any evidence for warring and fighting … The skeletal remains are distinctive in the lack of such evidence. There are few traces that one could identify as evidence of violent attack.
>
> (Hodder 2009, 110)

Although these comments are well taken, they reflect an atmosphere that sees these societies as governed by ritual, and scholars organized their research frames of reference to uncover this evidence and to elucidate its context. Evidence of violence was not sought, and finds that could have a link were ascribed to a different cause or significance. Fortifications and the weapons that accompanied individuals in the grave became symbolic of status or indicative of social identity. As a result these comments can be seen as covering arguments for a particular interpretive framework, but one that is increasingly unable to account for the emerging archaeological patterns observed. This does not come as a great surprise. There is ample evidence to suggest, and increasing acceptance, that archaeological patterning – in part or in whole – owes its genesis to concerns with ritual and belief that are not solely or uniquely related to economic/subsistence concerns. Although there may not be evidence for warrior society at Çatalhöyük and its near contemporaries in the Near East, there is evidence for violence and candidates for scapegoating behavior at Çatalhöyük, Wadi Mataha, and perhaps at Jerf el Ahmar.

The recent evidence of cranial trauma at Çatalhöyük suggests that what may be intragroup violence was present among the inhabitants of the site, sporadically but continually over the course of the site's occupation (Glencross and Knüsel 2015). On the basis of the trauma meted out to Sk. 3368, these traumatic injuries may very well represent the result of socially mediated reactions to the appearance and, perhaps less easily observed, the behavior of an individual (see Milella et al. 2016). This may represent evidence of repeated acts of scapegoating of individuals considered to violate social norms at Çatalhöyük. The evidence suggests that intragroup violence, at least, was present in Neolithic communities and that scapegoating may have acted to avert reprisal violence. If and when this internal violence was turned into externally directed aggression, in the earlier Neolithic in western Asia as in the earliest phases of the European Neolithic, remains an issue of intense interest.

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5

Ritual Practices and Conflict Mitigation at Early Neolithic Körtik Tepe and Göbekli Tepe, Upper Mesopotamia

A Mimetic Theoretical Approach

Lee Clare, Oliver Dietrich, Julia Gresky, Jens Notroff, Joris Peters, and Nadja Pöllath

The cognitive principles of the social brain have remained unaltered since their appearance in anatomically modern humans in Africa some 200,000 years ago. However, by the Early Holocene these capacities were being challenged by the outcomes of newly emerging lifeways, commonly referred to as 'Neolithic'. Growing levels of sedentism and new and expanding social networks were prompting a unique series of behavioural and cultural responses. In recent years, research at the early Neolithic (PPNA) occupation site of Körtik Tepe has provided evidence for heightened levels of interpersonal violence and homicide; yet, at the same time, there are no indications in the present archaeological record for between-group fighting ('warfare'). In this study, we investigate whether this scenario, at a time when we might expect to see a rise in intercommunity frictions in the wake of adjusting subsistence strategies and socio-political boundaries, can be at least partially explained by René Girard's mimetic theory. To this end we consult the pictorial repertoire from the contemporaneous and extraordinary site of Göbekli Tepe.

New Lifeways, New Challenges

Processes of Early Holocene sedentism are associated with the agglomeration of late hunter-gatherer populations within the confines of spatially limited permanent settlement systems, possibly with fixed territorial claims, including access rights to key biotic and abiotic resources, and

with an economy based on stored harvests of wild cereals and pulses, and broad-spectrum hunting. While the earliest expressions of sedentism are found in the Levant from the Early Natufian (13th millennium cal BC) onwards, in Upper Mesopotamia permanently co-resident communities appear slightly later, during the Younger Dryas (e.g. Körtik Tepe, Abu Hureyra). By the subsequent early PPNA there is, however, a clear increase in the number of permanent settlements, as documented in the Upper Tigris river basin at Çayönü, Hallan Çemi, Hasankeyf Höyük, and Gusir Höyük (Figure 5.1). These sites feature round, semi-subterranean architecture of stone and/or mudbrick ('kerpiç') with organic superstructures. Still further early PPNA sites are known from the banks of the Upper Euphrates in modernday northwest Syria, including Tell 'Abr 3, Tell Qaramel, Jerf el Ahmar, Sheikh Hassan, and Mureybet, albeit with no known contemporaneous occupations in the adjacent Harran plain, in the Balikh valley, or in the Khabur basin (Hole 2013: 25–26).

Alone the spatial extension of individual settlements can provide some indication for population sizes of respective communities. However, even here, this task is difficult, not least due to limited excavation areas, inherent uncertainties concerning the contemporaneousness of excavated structures, and in some cases natural and anthropogenic post-PPNA disturbance processes. Some time ago, community levels at PPNA sites in the southern Levant were discussed by Ian Kuijt (2000: table 1). Kuijt's calculations were based on site sizes combined with ethnographic data relating to the number of documented inhabitants living in an area of 1 ha settlement. Using these same data, similar calculations are undertaken for PPNA sites in Upper Mesopotamia (Table 5.1). Certainly, these figures are nothing more than tentative approximations; however, in spite of their potential limitations, they provide an important basis for discussion. Accordingly, even taking into account the lowest estimated population levels (Table 5.1,1), the mean number of inhabitants in eight PPNA sites lies at 128; this number increases to 419 if we adhere to calculations based on a less conservative value (Table 5.1,2). In the case of Göbekli Tepe (not included in Table 5.1), the status of the site as a permanent settlement remains a matter of contention; indeed, issues of recent debate have focused on whether ritual enclosures may also have fulfilled a 'domestic' function (Banning 2011; Dietrich and Notroff 2015).

The agglomeration of larger and ever expanding groups in the first millennium of the Holocene would have culminated in various new challenges, including the promotion of common identities and group cohesion, the

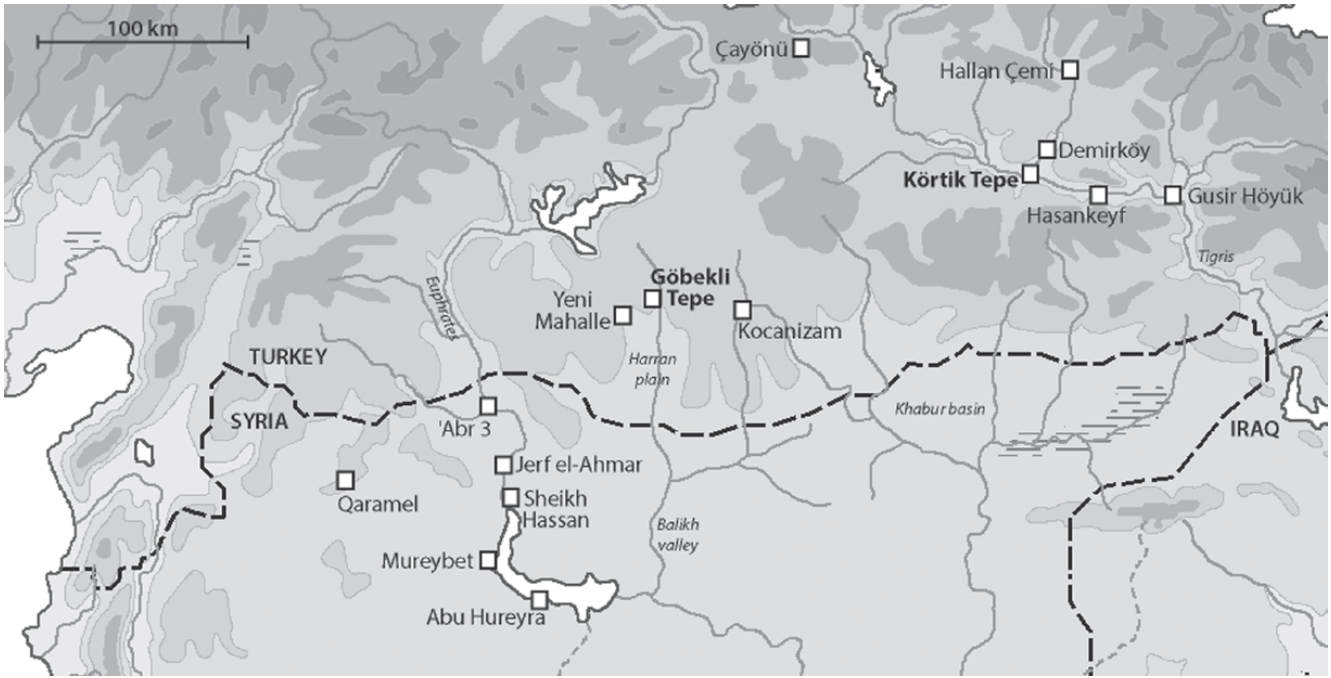

FIGURE 5.1 The location of Göbekli Tepe in relation to other Neolithic sites in northern Mesopotamia. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI).

TABLE 5.1 *Estimated population levels for some PPNA sites in Upper Mesopotamia*

Site	Site area (ha)	Estimated pop. level (1)	Estimated pop. level (2)
Demirköy	0.5	45	147
Gusir Höyük	2.5	225	735
Hallan Çemi	0.5	45	147
Hasankeyf Höyük	1.8	162	529
Jerf el Ahmar	1.0	90	294
Kocanizam	0.1	9	29
Körtik Tepe	1.5	135	441
Tell Qaramel	3.5	315	1,029
Mean estimated population level		128	419

Note: Estimated population levels are based on ethnological comparisons for an average number of inhabitants (agriculturalists) in a 1 ha large village. Estimated population level (1) assumes 90 inhabitants/1 ha (Kramer 1982: 162; Watson 1979: 35–47; cf. Kuijt 2000: table 1). Estimated population level (2) calculates 294 inhabitants/1 ha (van Beek 1982: 64–65; cf. Kuijt 2000: table 1).

handling of cumulable material wealth, and in some cases related emerging levels of social inequality. These conclusions are not of our own invention but are ones that have been discussed frequently by social anthropologists working in this field. In this chapter, we wish to focus on one particular challenge: the suspected heightened levels of competition between rival groups and ultimately increased readiness for violence due to growing population and resource pressures (e.g. Guilaine and Zammit 2005: 85; Runnels et al. 2009; Bar-Yosef 2010). Although not entirely unfounded, such scenarios presently not only appear overly simplistic, they imply the notion that between-group conflict, and ultimately warfare, was something innovative, 'invented' by human societies as they became increasingly complex. Although this inference should not be entirely dismissed, we feel that our attention, and therefore our explanations for such a development, should shift to include an evaluation of the parallel cognitive challenges experienced by late hunter-gatherer populations. These people, whether consciously or unconsciously, were living through one of the most critical transitions in human history, one which would take them from small-scale mobile hunter-gatherer lifeways to sedentary and (eventually) incipient food-producing economies.

In this context, we briefly turn to findings by Robin Dunbar that humans are strictly limited in the scale of their working social group

TABLE 5.2 *The rule-of-3 showing variations in the levels of personal networks among hunter-gatherers.*

Social groupings among hunter-gatherers	Numbers	Personal network
Tribes (language)	1,500	Far acquaintances
Mega-bands (marriage and trade)	500	Near acquaintances
Communities (Dunbar's number)	150	Friends
Bands (overnight camp groups)	50	Good friends
Foraging group (support group)	15	Best friends
Intimate group (soul mates)	5	Close intimates

Note: After Gamble et al. (2014: table 2.1). The size of the neocortex in the human brain limits the number of people with whom an individual can have reciprocal relationships (Dunbar's number).

(Dunbar 1993, 2008; Gamble et al. 2014; cf. Sterelny and Watkins 2015). The size of this group (~150), commonly referred to as 'Dunbar's number', is the maximum size of a 'community' with whom any one individual can have reciprocal relationships of trust and obligation; this number is limited by the size of the human brain. The 150 individuals within an individual's community are arranged in a series of layers, each of which corresponds to different qualities of relationship (Table 5.2).

Individuals who are not members of our community are people that we seldom see, and the less frequent the contact, the lower the emotional quality of our relationships: ergo, the less likely we are to act altruistically towards them.[1] At this point, we recall the estimated population levels assumed for PPNA domestic sites in Upper Mesopotamia, the populations of some of which approach (and even exceed) 150 (Table 5.1). Accordingly, it is posited that PPNA populations were among the first to come face to face with the cognitive challenges presented by increases in population levels reaching and surpassing Dunbar's number. For this reason, as previously suggested by Trevor Watkins (2012), the later Epipalaeolithic and particularly the Early Neolithic would have seen a scaling up of already prevailing, age-old hunter-gatherer (Palaeolithic) nested social networks, culminating in the emergence of new levels of cognitive and cultural skills with associated systems of symbolic representation. Clive Gamble and

[1] The only notable exceptions to this rule are family members (kin). Even in times of prolonged absence, the quality of the relationship and the willingness to act altruistically does not decrease.

colleagues (2014: 189) are slightly more specific in their conclusions, claiming instead that communities would have required three new socio-cultural responses to deal with these newly emerging circumstances: 'religion', 'leadership', and 'warfare'. In this chapter, we will touch on all three of these responses. In so doing, we shall address two intrinsically linked components of transitional Neolithic systems: 'conflict mitigation' and the 'sacred'.

An Uneasy Peace…?

Whether we adhere to the basic notion that growing population pressure and competitive access to resources would have culminated in an increased likelihood of conflict in the run up to Neolithisation, or prefer to delve deeper and consider the limitations and implications of human cognitive capacities and the risks these could have posed to altruistic and cooperative behaviour, this does not change the fact that there is presently no conclusive evidence for intergroup fighting in the early Pre-Pottery Neolithic. In a special issue of 'Neo-Lithics' journal published in 2010 that was dedicated to the topic 'Conflict and Warfare in the Near Eastern Neolithic', contributions by leading scholars highlighted the conspicuous lack of archaeological evidence for intra- and intergroup violence at PPN sites, a finding that has meanwhile found confirmation in analyses of human skeletal material from Turkish sites (Erdal and Erdal 2012). Additionally, in his more recent synopsis Ferguson (2013) has also stated that the PPNA has so far yielded little more than paltry evidence for war (Ferguson 2013: 213, 216). This apparent absence of between-group violence in the Early Holocene (but see Chapter 3 this volume) also contradicts numerous studies to have highlighted the significant levels of aggression (and sometimes unrestrained violence) that can be encountered in 'traditional' forager, hunter-gatherer, and horticulturalist societies, frequently consulted and used as analogies in prehistoric case studies (e.g. Keeley 1996; LeBlanc 2004; Guilaine and Zammit 2005). In line with these latter studies is criticism that archaeological evidence for conflict simply goes unnoticed, i.e. with too little attention paid to the full range of potential sources, especially in periods and regions where evidence for physical aggression is not immediately forthcoming (Roscoe 2010; and see Chapter 3 this volume). Although a perfectly rational and tenable conclusion, caution should nevertheless be exercised if we wish to avoid a situation which sees the 'bellicosification' of prehistory, perhaps accompanied by a 'neo-Hobbesian' notion that a governing apparatus

provides the only adequate mechanism for preventing human acts of interpersonal and between-group violence.

Notably, some recent studies have instead claimed that evolutionary pressures during the millennia of Neolithic genesis may actually have fostered the emergence of cooperative institutions, thus in agreement with the absence for conflict in the PPN archaeological record (Choi and Bowles 2007; Bowles 2008). However, this consensus is only partial; paradoxically, it is also stated that these same pressures could also have promoted hostility towards individuals not of the same ethnic, racial, or other group. Indeed, it has even been proposed that warfare itself could have contributed to the spread of altruism in the prehistoric past (Bowles and Gintis 2011: 146–147).

On the other hand, one might follow Boehm (2012) who recently discussed the concept of 'morality' and its role in the mitigation of conflict in modern 'Late Pleistocene-appropriate' forager cultures. Boehm has proposed that a conscience-based sense of right and wrong is inherent to all small, multifamily egalitarian bands. Accordingly, this mechanism functions as a political catalyst which intensifies negative group reactions to personal aggrandisement. Conflict is vigilantly mediated by moral concerns, thus intensifying social control and making it more effective (Boehm 2012: 845; Gintis et al. 2015: 336). However, it is questionable whether these mechanisms, in which 'alpha-male behaviour' could be effectively 'nipped in the bud' by moral concerns, were still effective in the expanding communities of the early Aceramic Neolithic. Indeed, for this latter period, specifically from the south-eastern Turkish site of Körtik Tepe, we note increasing evidence for what can be tentatively interpreted as interpersonal violence and homicide.

Körtik Tepe

Körtik Tepe is located on the west bank of the Tigris, some 30 km west of the south-eastern Turkish city of Batman (Özkaya and Coşkun 2011; Benz et al. 2013). This site is unique in that it has produced extremely large numbers of early Aceramic Neolithic burials, some 743 excavated graves containing more than 800 skeletonised individuals. So far, of this number a total of 446 individuals from 374 graves have been analysed, the human remains providing unprecedented insights into many aspects of defleshing and post-depositional treatment of the dead in this PPNA community (Erdal 2015). Additionally, and of particular interest to the present discussion, is evidence relating to antemortem and perimortem

skeletal trauma. Remarkably, 34.2% of 269 analysed skulls show signs of cranial injuries, while 20.7% of 261 analysed individuals have produced evidence for post-cranial trauma.

Among the cranial injuries identified at Körtik Tepe, almost all are small in size (<15 mm) and there are a smaller number of severe healed skull injuries, four of which are described as penetrating traumatic injuries. The skulls of two females have also produced evidence for penetrative depressed fractures; interesting in this context, though obviously a matter for further discussion elsewhere, is the observation that females living in male-dominated polygynous societies are more likely to be systematically subjected to beatings involving the head (Harrod et al. 2013: 69–70). In contrast, men are more likely to exhibit a more balanced ratio between cranial and post-cranial violence, a direct result of hand-to-hand fighting. Additionally, deep cranial depressions in men can be linked to duelling with close-combat weapons (Harrod et al. 2013: 70). Most post-cranial injuries at Körtik Tepe comprise finger and rib fractures, though three individuals do show healed parry fractures to their ulnae, a convincing sign of violent confrontations. Special mention should also be made of two individuals whose skeletons revealed embedded points. In the first case, two bone points were found impacted in the skull, and the second case (a young adult female) was found with a flint micro-arrow point lodged in the left femur (Erdal 2015).

Violence in a Changing World: A Mimetic Theoretical Approach

In this present study it is posited that the evidence from Körtik Tepe, instead of being indicative of intergroup conflict, is rather more suggestive of scenarios of internal fighting. This is inferred, for example, by the absence of other archaeological evidence for warfare, such as settlement defences (fences and ditches), mass graves, burnt horizons, specialised weapons, and related pictorial representations (see Helbling 2006: 126–133). Further, cutmarks found on skulls at Körtik Tepe are untypical of scalping, an activity considered a clear marker for intergroup conflict (Erdal 2015). Scalping (or trophy-taking) is an action geared towards what has previously been termed *political violence*, which includes not only the mutilation of the dead by the victors, but also the physical subjugation of vanquished communities (Pérez 2013).

Therefore, although archaeological evidence for armed combat between rival communities is absent, there is little doubt that interpersonal

violence within communities did exist. Although the reasons for this internal bloodshed remain a matter of speculation, such disputes among complex hunter-gatherers could have arisen due to socio-political rivalry, matters of prestige and honour, and feuding (Otterbein 2009: 24–26). Additionally, the violent acts recorded at Körtik Tepe, and more specifically the small number of homicides, could represent something much more profound; they could be indicative of the group sharing in the persecution of a universal subject of hate (or *scapegoat*) whose murder was sought to unify the group, to contain the spread of further murder, anarchy, and ultimately the collapse of prevailing social orders. This is one of the insights deriving from René Girard's *mimetic theory* (Girard 2013 [1972]) which also identifies the mimetic mechanisms of human desire and the realisation that shared violent persecutions may have ultimately led to the ubiquitous human institution of ritual sacrifice in archaic religions (Girard 2010). Perhaps in the case of Körtik Tepe, the shared violent persecution of the scapegoat could have been accentuated by what can be referred to as the creation of a spectacle: we recall the disproportionately large number of head injuries at Körtik Tepe, and here particularly the individual with two bone projectile points embedded in the skull, a most traumatic and unusual injury. Indeed, trauma to the head and face may have been chosen quite specifically. These wounds not only bleed more easily and more profusely, they are also much more visible and can even stigmatise people for life. Thus cranial trauma could have been an effective means of marking a victim and establishing the social and political dominance of the perpetrator (see Harrod et al. 2013: 69–70).

Taking this one step further, assuming that Körtik Tepe is representative of other Early Holocene communities and considering the entanglement of socio-political and ritual spheres in prehistoric societies, one wonders whether the observations from the skeletal record at Körtik Tepe might imply a PPN foundation belief based on violence and/or sacrifice. This hypothesis is certainly in accord with the principles of mimetic theory that the sacred is identifiable with a 'good' form of institutionalised violence that holds in check 'bad' anarchic violence (Girard 2013 [1972]; cf. Dupuy 2013: 15). Remarkably, in the absence of modern legal/juridical systems, sacrifice is noted as among the most effective means of quelling violence between rival (traditional) communities. If this holds true, then ritual sites such as Göbekli Tepe, with their manifold pictorial references to death, could have been used to promote intergroup solidarity and to mitigate intercommunity conflict, thus offering an explanation for the

lack of archaeological evidence indicative of between-group violence in the early PPN.

Göbekli Tepe

The hilltop sanctuary of Göbekli Tepe is one of the most significant monumental expressions of early Aceramic Neolithic ritual in Upper Mesopotamia (Schmidt 2000, 2002a, 2002b, 2005, 2006a, 2010a, 2010b). Presently in its twentieth year of field investigations, a total of nine structures, frequently referred to as temples, have been investigated. These megalithic enclosures typically comprise circular or oval ground plans, demarcated by one or more (in this case semi-concentric) dry-stone walls, into which a series of monolithic limestone T-shaped pillars were incorporated. At their centre, these enclosures feature two larger T-pillars (up to 5.5 m in height). The T-shape is clearly discernible as an abstract anthropomorphic form, in some cases enhanced by the application of reliefs, e.g. arms, hands, belts, loin cloths, and pendants, as well as high and low reliefs of wild animals and geometrical symbols.

It is suggested here that the Göbekli Tepe ritual enclosures, the T-pillars, and associated pictorial representations and sculptures could be understood as the stage and scenery for a late hunter-gatherer mythological narrative, one used by these communities for the conveyance of shared moral values, the documentation of group memories and histories, the formation of identities, and the promotion of intergroup cooperation and altruism. In the subsequent part of this chapter, we focus on the role that pictorial references to death could have played in the advancement of intergroup solidarity. This line of interpretation is founded on three underlying assumptions, the first relating to the definition of Göbekli Tepe as a meeting place of different (geographically distinct) groups of complex hunter-gatherer groups, the second being the acceptance that depictions also include representations of death and/or sacrifice, and finally, and perhaps most importantly, the recognition that sacrifice (the shared violent persecution of a victim or scapegoat) is one of the most effective means of quelling violence between rival communities in the absence of an authoritarian legal/juridical system.

Whereas numerous contributions have already focused on the role of Göbekli Tepe as meeting place (e.g. Schmidt 2005; Dietrich et al. 2012; Notroff et al. 2014; Dietrich and Notroff 2015), in this chapter emphasis is limited to the relation of the monuments to the dead, and particularly indications for the practice of human and/or animal sacrifice. In the

following, this evidence is reviewed and its implications for a mimetic theoretical interpretation will be discussed.

Göbekli Tepe as Place of the Dead

The interpretation of Göbekli Tepe as a place of the dead looks back on a long history in the publications by Klaus Schmidt. A first, albeit tentative, indirect reference can be found in the proceedings of a meeting held at Liège in 1997, just two years after initiation of excavations at the site (Schmidt 1998). At this time, fieldwork had only been undertaken in what would later be referred to as Enclosure A, in the *Rock Temple* (later Enclosure E), and in the so-called Lion-Pillar-Building near the summit of the north-eastern mound (Figure 5.2). Schmidt's contribution to the proceedings closes with a statement, though clearly a question addressed to his future research at the site: 'The transcendental world of the structures discovered at Nevalı Çori and Göbekli Tepe is still unclear to us. It is perhaps still too early to ask of these archaeological features whether the large sculptures [T-pillars] are those of gods, guardians or demons' (Schmidt 1998: 677; our translation from the German). In the following seasons, continued fieldwork led to the discovery of walls and pillars attributed to Enclosures B and C (Schmidt 2000). Newly identified depictions of animals reinforced Schmidt's convictions that these too should be regarded as forces of power or guardians living in a mythological world (Hauptmann and Schmidt 2000: 265–266). Further, sculptures portraying animals holding human heads, analogous to those discovered previously at Nevalı Çori and Çatalhöyük, were considered a safe indication of beliefs in an afterlife (Schmidt 1999: 7–8) (Figure 5.3). By 2002, work had been undertaken in all four circular enclosures (A–D) in the main excavation area. By now, it was also clear that at the end of their lifecycles these structures had been intentionally backfilled (or ritually buried). In this context, it was even speculated whether the enclosures were not the elaborate burial monuments of prominent individuals from this late hunter-gatherer society (Schmidt 2002a: 8–9; Peters and Schmidt 2004).

Klaus Schmidt's monograph, *Sie bauten die ersten Tempel*, was published in 2006. Here we find for the first time a more detailed account of Göbekli Tepe as a place dedicated to a cult of the dead (*Totenkult*) (Schmidt 2006b: 125–127). He based this interpretation on the absence of clay figurines and female representations, which Schmidt considered quintessential references to life and reproduction (see Morsch 2002). Instead, he saw himself confronted by the numerous images of what he

FIGURE 5.2 Map of excavated areas at Göbekli Tepe. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI).

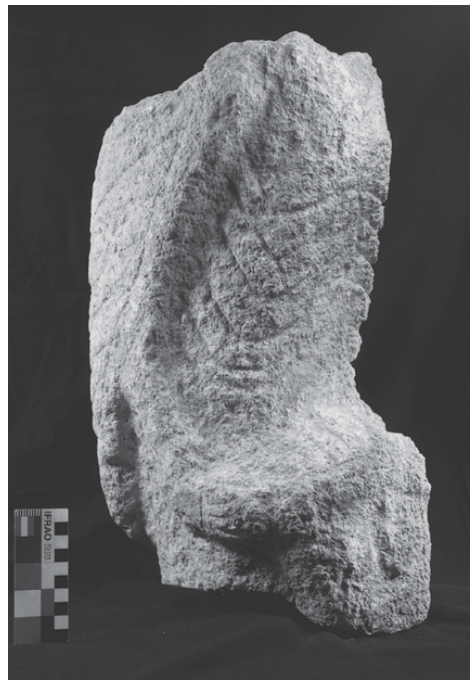

FIGURE 5.3 A recent discovery from Göbekli Tepe of a bird (the head is missing) perched upon a human head (cf. Dietrich et al. 2014: 15). Photo: N. Becker, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI).

referred to as *guardians* and/or *demons*, as well as a clear dominance of male symbolism, including the frequent addition of male genitalia to animal images, and finds of carved phalli. Furthermore, there was no apparent sign of domestic activity in the excavated areas of the mound, thus implying a predominantly ritual function of the site. Certainly, the difficulty with the *Totenkult* interpretation has always been the absence of human burials, something that Schmidt believed would change in the course of continued fieldwork in as yet unexcavated parts of the monuments (see also Schmidt 2010a: 243, 246).

Göbekli Tepe and Sacrifice

Far from being planned, built, and subsequently abandoned spaces, the monumental enclosures at Göbekli Tepe were profoundly dynamic. These multi-phase structures were subject to frequent change and rearrangement, as testified to by, for example, the incorporation of T-pillars, and probably also worked stone blocks and slabs, from other (older, contemporaneous,

or newer) enclosures. Finally, at the end of their respective lifecycles, the buildings appear to have been intentionally backfilled (or buried). In this context, it has been suggested that the responsible group or community gathered at the site for celebratory burial rites which could have involved the congregation of a considerable workforce, perhaps motivated by large-scale feasting events (Dietrich et al. 2012; Dietrich and Notroff 2015). Demographic profiling in wild herbivores (aurochs, Asiatic wild ass, Persian gazelle), as well as isotope analysis in the latter species, point to gatherings in late summer and autumn (Lang et al. 2013).

It is not totally unreasonable to assume that the implied death or killing of a monument of this type, which could also have included the smashing and deposition of limestone sculptures, and its subsequent burial could be understood as a sacrifice in the sense of René Girard. The interment of an enclosure and its congregation of anthropomorphic beings (ancestral/mythical founding fathers or gods; cf. Becker et al. 2012) may have functioned as a symbolic re-enactment of a historically real event, a required act of reconciliation, i.e. they were the chosen victims or scapegoats. The expressed aim of this ritual sacrifice would have been to actively resolve intergroup hostilities, an alternative measure to intergroup fighting. This interpretation gains in credibility if we follow the interpretation that each of the enclosures was erected by a different community (clan). Remarkably, and important for the Girardian approach, the interred structures, and particularly their T-pillar congregations, may have continued to be revered by subsequent generations, perhaps in recognition of their sacrifice. This is inferred from the physical and spatial consideration of the buried monuments through the exclusion of their locations from later building activities (Figure 5.4). The community responsible for the construction of the smaller semi-rectangular houses in the EPPNB knew very well where the PPNA enclosures lay buried, even segregating this area by means of a terrace wall. The top ends of some of the highest pillars were even visible for some time, resulting in their secondary usage as 'work-benches'; however, it remains open to question whether this new function was strictly domestic or also had ritual connotations (Schmidt 2006b: 164).

Admittedly, the above interpretation is entirely hypothetical, though it could be supported by other signs of the existence of a sense of the sacred within the Upper Mesopotamian PPN worldview. In search of such evidence we now turn to the artistic imagery from Göbekli Tepe, where a total of four different groups of depictions are differentiated (Schmidt 2013a):

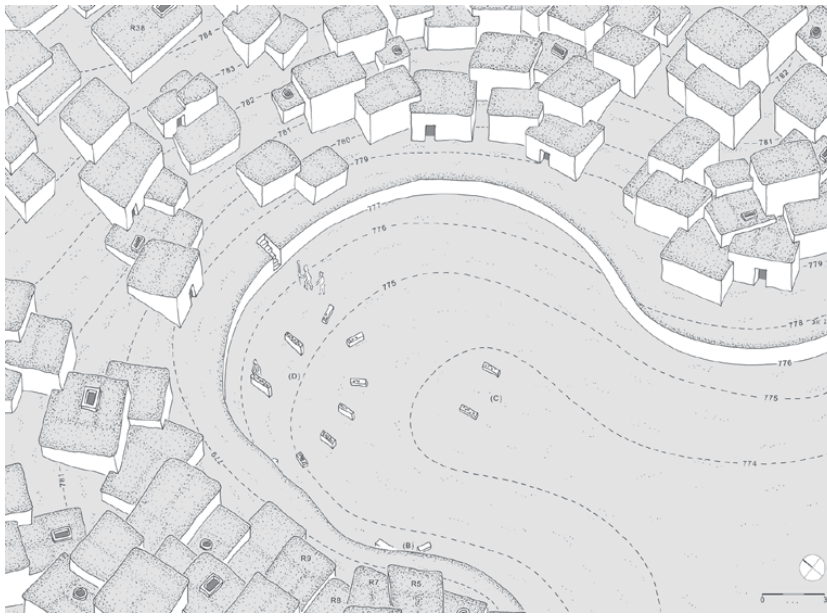

FIGURE 5.4 Reconstruction of the final EPPNB phase (layer II) at Göbekli Tepe. Although the enclosures (A–D) had been ritually buried by this time, the top ends of some pillars of Enclosures B and D (and probably the central pillars of Enclosure C) were visible to later generations. Image: D. Kurapkat (2015: fig. 248).

1 More or less naturalistic medium and large-sized limestone sculptures and high reliefs of animals, humans, and composite representations;
2 low reliefs on T-pillars;
3 limestone or steatite figurines; and
4 graffiti-like engravings applied to T-pillars and limestone slabs.

Sculptures and high reliefs from Group 1 are noted by Schmidt for their aforementioned apotropaic role; typical motifs in this group include aggressive animals, humans in either a guarding or praying (?) posture, and animals holding human heads (Schmidt 2013a: 146). Group 2 comprises depictions of animal taxa (mammals and birds), reptiles, invertebrates (insects/spiders), geometric symbols (circles, rings, crescents), and in just two cases the depictions of humans (see below). On the other hand, the repertoires of Groups 3 and 4 cannot be strictly delimited; although animal taxa are a frequent motif, there also exist numerous exotic pieces that make any classification along similar lines difficult, for example, these

FIGURE 5.5 Ithyphallic depictions from Göbekli Tepe: Left: Sculpture (surface find) submitted to the Şanlıurfa Museum prior to excavations (height: 40.5 cm). Centre: Decapitated individual (arrow), the right arm raised, bent at the elbow (low relief, Pillar 23, Enclosure D). Right: Figurine (surface find) from 2012; legs are pulled up tight to the stomach/chest, hands clutching the knees (appearing to hold them in place), gaze fixed slightly upwards; on his back he carries(?) an unidentified quadruped (height: 5 cm).

include a human (male) figurine with an animal on his back (Figure 5.5, right), and the graffiti of a female (the only known depiction of a woman from Göbekli Tepe) found applied to a stone slab in the EPPNB Lion-Pillar-Building (Schmidt 2006b: 238, fig. 104; Schmidt 2010a: fig. 13).

Animal Sacrifice

As previously stated, death is a constant in the artistic imagery at Göbekli Tepe, and in some cases, the content of this constant shows clear affinities to what can be described as the sacrificial. In this context, let us first turn to the snarling predators, a group of depictions interpreted by Klaus Schmidt as 'guardians of a kingdom of the dead, inhabited by snakes, spiders, centipedes, scorpions, hyenas, vultures, and headless humans' (Schmidt 2013b: 200; our translation from the German). Snarling predators were among the first image groups identified at Göbekli Tepe, taking the form of large limestone sculptures and high reliefs (Group 1 after Schmidt 2013b; cf. Schmidt 2008b) (Figure 5.6). In some cases, where only the head of the predator is preserved, these were probably struck from larger figures, e.g. those found adorning T-pillars and other large worked limestone slabs, an act which may (or may not) have been associated with the killing and burial of the respective enclosure (see above).

FIGURE 5.6 Pillar 27 in Enclosure C of Göbekli Tepe showing a snarling predator in high relief about to strike a wild boar, depicted in low relief. Photo: D. Johannes, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI).

Admittedly, a snarling predator alone does not make for a sacrificial act; however, in one case a victim is also depicted, thus confirming the role of these creatures as potential perpetrators. In the scene described on Pillar 27 in Enclosure C (Figure 5.6) a ferocious big cat (leopard?) appears in high relief, poised to strike a wild boar (depicted in low relief), but in agreement with the imagery found in other enclosures, the act of killing is not shown. Rather, images appear to be restricted to the moment just before the act and thereafter, perhaps indicative of a social taboo. Remarkably, in the same enclosure, we also find the representation

of the dead boar, lying back down, trotters in the vertical, applied to a fragmented portal stone in the building's entrance passage (*dromos*) (Schmidt 2010a: fig. 26). In Enclosure D, we are confronted with a similar scene to that just described from Enclosure C. It tells of the final moments of an aurochs which appears to have fallen victim to a deadly snake attack. This narrative adorns the narrow front (inward-facing) side of Pillar 20. The perpetrator (the snake) is shown moving vertically down the shaft of the monolith; its victim's legs are buckled forwards, a clear sign of its impending end, having succumbed to the poisonous charge of its attacker.

A further motif suggestive of a death-bringing act can be found adorning two pillars, one in Enclosure A and one in Enclosure C. Both carry images of what have been interpreted as nets. In the case of the western central T-pillar (P1) of Enclosure A, the low relief of a net was carved into its north-east-facing broad side. Upon closer inspection, this net is woven from seventeen snakes, the heads of which (eight at the top and nine at the bottom) are depicted as broad-triangles, the characteristic shape for the venomous Levant viper (*Macrovipera lebetina*). Beneath the deadly snake-net is the depiction of a potential victim, a quadruped, previously identified as a ram. It is of special note that this representation already struck a chord with Klaus Schmidt, who in *Sie bauten die ersten Tempel* made a connection between it and the scapegoat narrative (Schmidt 2006b: 119–120). His tentative suggestion that this relief could treble the age of this already ancient myth shows, as he put it, the immense potential of the images discovered at Göbekli Tepe (Schmidt 2006b: 120). A second net adorns Pillar 12 in Enclosure C, albeit this is less convincing than the first. Referred to by Klaus Schmidt as *Enten im Netz* (ducks in a net), this motif could also show the five birds as they negotiate the local rocky landscape (Schmidt 2006b: 148–150).

Whereas the role of the snarling predator appears to be restricted to that of perpetrator, in the case of the snake there are indications that this venomous creature could also be a victim. A first narrative in which this is inferred stems from Pillar 43 in Enclosure D. This monolith, which is located on the northern side of this building, where it is incorporated into the dry-stone enclosure wall, is among the most intricately decorated pillars so far discovered at Göbekli Tepe (Figure 5.5, centre); P43 will also feature in our discussion of potential human sacrifices (see below). The narrative carved on its western-facing broad side is complex and any interpretation remains conjectural. Following Schmidt (2008a: 257), one part of this narrative could be spatially limited to the horizontal head

of the pillar: the large vulture, seated on the left, balances an egg (circle) on its left wing, from whence a northern bald ibis (*Geronticus eremita*) chick hatches (right). Above the chick, we see the bird fully grown, as it takes on (and kills?) a snake; Schmidt's additional reference to the association of the ibis to the realm of the dead, e.g. based on analogues from ancient Egypt, is highly speculative, and any parallel would be entirely coincidental.

A further example in which a snake appears to be attacked comes from Enclosure H, in the north-western part of the site (Dietrich et al. 2014). This depiction stems from another of the impressive narrative pillars at Göbekli Tepe: Pillar 56 is incorporated into the wall of this enclosure; its south-facing broad side is covered by a carpet of at least fifty-one different animals, including birds, snakes, and quadrupeds (Schmidt 2013a: 148–149). A central figure in this *horror vacui* is also one of the largest. An eagle is depicted with its wings outstretched, covering the very centre of the head of the pillar. The bird is shown grabbing a snake between its talons. Interestingly, osseous remains pertaining to the snake eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*) have been noted in the faunal record. This action is not only implied by the proximity of the two depictions, it is also suggested by the unusual buckled shape of the snake, which differs from all other snake representations on the pillar that are more or less consistently wavy in their design.

An apparent desire to capture the very moment of death (following the deadly blow) is evident in a recently discovered depiction on Pillar 66, also in Enclosure H (Figure 5.7). Initially, attention was drawn to this monolith owing to its anomalous orientation; instead of one of its front narrow sides, one of its broad sides faces towards the centre of the enclosure. Furthermore, it appears to have been marked from above by a large worked stone with a deep cavity, perhaps subsequent to the intentional backfilling of the structure. Pillar 66 is not complete but broken at the shaft, thus indicative of its secondary usage and incorporation into the wall. The monolith features a (30 cm) deep cavity at its centre, just below the transition from head to shaft. Pillars of this type are not unusual at Göbekli Tepe; they are also attested in Enclosures B and D. Yet, it is not just these features that make Pillar 66 special; far more it is the engravings which adorn its inner-facing broad side, just above the cavity. These depict a scene with two aurochs, their tongues hanging limp from their mouths and their legs buckled. This scene tells of the death of these two beasts. A bird, perhaps a vulture, is already perched on the shoulder of the larger animal. A zigzag line, apparently emitting from

FIGURE 5.7 Pillar 66 in Enclosure H showing two (one large and one smaller) aurochs at the moment of death; tongues are hanging limp from their mouths and legs are buckled forwards. Photo: N. Becker, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI).

the eye of the larger aurochs, could be interpreted as a stream of blood. A most intriguing and exciting aspect of the P66 depiction is its similarity to a wall painting at Çatalhöyük. Here too, an aurochs is portrayed in a baiting scene (Russell 2012: 79–82). The similarities are certainly remarkable and may attest to some aspects of continuity in this form of depiction, and perhaps even in the act of bull baiting, spanning the PPNA to the Late Neolithic (some 3,000 years).

In the context of this discussion, mention must also be made of the half-skeletonised representations of animals at Göbekli Tepe (Schmidt 2013b). Significantly, while the bodies of these individuals are depicted in what might be described as a depleted state, e.g. with the ribcage showing through the skin, other parts of the body, including the head and extremities, appear normal. If these animals indeed constitute a symbolic representation of death, one might ask why the heads and extremities are not depicted in a similar emaciated way. Perhaps this was

just a simple solution of the craftsmen, ribs being easier to depict than skulls and skeletonised legs. Alternatively, it cannot be ruled out that the appearance was intended. Schmidt refers to an early medieval form of execution (the 'blood-eagle') which involved the removal of the skin and flesh of the human victims to reveal ribs and spine (Schmidt 2013b: 197–199). Intriguingly, a first representation of a half-skeletonised human was recently discovered at the site, the first of its kind at Göbekli Tepe (Dietrich et al. 2014: 15, fig. 11). Be this as it may, this line of interpretation is entirely hypothetical; there is absolutely no scientific evidence for such activities.

Human Sacrifice?

In addition to the aforementioned representation of the half-skeletonised human, there are some indications, albeit less convincing than the animal depictions, for scenes showing human dead or possibly sacrifices. As we have already seen, to capture the moment of death when working with the medium of sculpture is no trivial matter, especially in cases where the act itself cannot (or perhaps should not) be shown. Previously, it has been demonstrated that the moment of death in animals requires a visible proxy, one which is thought to be characteristic of serious danger, a violent end, and the transition from life to death, e.g. a limp tongue hanging from the mouth, skeletisation, or a supine position with extremities stretched in the vertical. For human representations, such a proxy has been sought in the characteristic terminal erection of the victim's penis, an interpretation first suggested in the context of the bird-man and the bull from the shaft at Lascaux (Spatz 2001: 399), and later referred to by Klaus Schmidt as a likely explanation for the depiction of an ithyphallic figure adorning Pillar 43 at Göbekli Tepe (Schmidt 2006a: 40; 2008a: 257) (Figure 5.5, centre).

This interpretation is, however, misinformed and does not hold up to closer scrutiny, especially in light of available insights from forensic medicine (see Henssge and Madea 2004). Accordingly, there is absolutely no evidence that a violent death manifests itself in the erection of the victim's penis. Rather, when a person dies, the body (muscular system) goes limp. Under these conditions an erection of the penis is not possible. In fact, there are only two feasible explanations for the phenomenon popularly referred to as a 'death erection', and these are dependent upon circumstances post-mortem, primarily, (1) the position of the body and/or (2) the environmental conditions (temperature) in which the body is left. In the first case, the penis can swell if the body is left vertical, i.e. standing

or hanging, or lying on the stomach; blood collects in the lowermost parts of the body, which under certain preconditions can also lead to a swelling of the genitals. In the second case, the accumulation of gases at the onset of decomposition processes can lead to a bloating of the body; at room temperature this can occur within just a few days, sometimes culminating in the swelling of the penis, also mimicking an erection. In none of these cases can the erection be linked to a perimortem or post-mortem seminal discharge. It follows that these facts cast massive doubt on earlier contributions which have used the death erection in their interpretations of ithyphallic figures. Admittedly, the majority of these representations are likely to be of a purely symbolic nature, yet the question remains as to the connection between the erect penis and death, one that is so clearly attested in the decapitated ithyphallic figure from Pillar 43 (Figure 5.5, centre) and possibly in the sculptures (death portraits?) found on the surface of the site (Figure 5.5, left and right). It certainly cannot be ruled out that prehistoric societies were occasionally confronted with sights of post-mortem swelling of the male genitals, and here one might ask how this phenomenon was culturally interpreted (perhaps as a sign of male virility and social dominance).

Returning briefly to our focus on human depictions discovered at Göbekli Tepe, mention should be made of the second of just two known low reliefs found adorning T-pillars. Whereas the first headless, ithyphallic individual from the aforementioned narrative on P43 is assigned to the earlier PPNA phase at the site (level III), the human carved into Pillar XXV from Enclosure F stems from a building of uncertain chronological affiliation (PPNA/EPPNB). This shows the frontal view of a standing (gender neutral) figure. Above the person, there is what appears to be a small dog, its tail bent over its back (Schmidt 2009: 165–166; 2010a: 245). The unusual bodily proportions of this individual, in particular the long neck and the broad shoulders, might suggest that it is the depiction of a human skeleton. Still now, the only real human remains from Göbekli Tepe comprise a comparatively small collection of bone fragments recovered from the backfill of the round or oval enclosures. Although some of these have produced potential evidence for post-mortem manipulation, this does not deviate from known treatments of the dead during the early Aceramic Neolithic in Upper Mesopotamia and the Levant (see Goring-Morris and Belfer-Cohen 2014).

Finally, in the context of potential symbolic evidence for human sacrifice, we recall the finds of sculptures portraying carnivores and raptors holding severed (?) human heads (Figure 5.3). In direct analogy to these

objects is a singular example of a human who appears to be undertaking the same or a similar task. The so-called 'gift-bearer' was discovered in 2004 within a modern dry-stone wall located on the southern part of the south-east mound. The fragmented figure is reminiscent of a kneeling gift-bringer. Certainly the 'gift' held between its hands is of a very special type: it appears to be a human head; the eyes and nose can be clearly discerned (Schmidt 2006b: fig. 69).

Discussion

Aforementioned testimonies from Körtik Tepe and Göbekli Tepe appear unexpectedly favourable to interpretations based on Girard's mimetic theory. These include (a) a lack of archaeological evidence for warfare and the inference of complex intergroup conflict mitigation mechanisms; (b) the inference of ritualised interpersonal violence and homicide with a preoccupation with the transition from life to death; (c) the proposed symbolic killing, subsequent interment, and post-mortem veneration of enclosures and their T-pillar congregations; and (d) the production of reliefs and sculptures with clear emphasis on the discernment of perpetrators and victims. Nevertheless, there are some important points that should be addressed and clarified, particularly if we wish to avoid erroneous conclusions or any form of self-fulfilling prophecy:

1. Skeletal evidence cannot tell us the circumstances surrounding the deaths of murder victims identified at Körtik Tepe. Their interpretation as universal subjects of hate (scapegoats and sacrifices) is entirely speculative.
2. There is currently no archaeological evidence that human sacrifice ever took place at Göbekli Tepe. Human remains are comparatively scarce; where these are manipulated it conforms to known PPN burial rites, e.g. involving the secondary removal and special treatment of the skull and/or long bones.
3. Of medium- to large-sized game species, essentially meat-bearing parts are found in the backfill of the Göbekli Tepe enclosures; if sacrifices of wild animals had taken place at the site, then the most symbolic parts of the animal, e.g. the bucrania, often associated with post-sacrificial reverence, are missing; however, here we should note that carved depictions of bucrania are found adorning some of the T-pillars at the site.

These three points form the focus of our following discussion:

1 Recent studies undertaken on the skeletal remains from Körtik Tepe are exceptional for the early PPN in Upper Mesopotamia; not only are the number of burials unprecedented for a PPNA site, their detailed analysis is providing a first glimpse into the complex pathologies of an early sedentary community of complex hunter-gatherers in this region (Erdal 2015). Naturally, the identification of a sacrificial victim in the archaeological record is dependent on various circumstances, above all the pathology and the find context. Following Mallorie A. Hatch (2013: 204–205), torture and sacrifice would be associated with perimortem trauma, including sharp-force wounds, chopping, cutting, and burning; specific ages and sexes of victims; and symbolic mortuary tradition. It is certainly not our intention to make any detailed references to the Körtik Tepe skeletal material here; however, it is not without some curiosity that note is again made of the individual with the two bone projectiles lodged in the skull, which in addition to these wounds also features nine cutmarks to the occipital bone, a possible indication of symbolic mortuary treatment (Erdal 2015: 18). Concerning the numerous healed skull injuries from Körtik Tepe, it has already been remarked that these (when observed on female individuals) can serve as a marker of male-dominated polygynous societies; on the other hand, similar injuries are observed among individuals held as captives and slaves (Hatch 2013). Certainly, both these interpretations are extremely speculative and hold manifold implications for the reconstructions of social complexity and belief systems of early Aceramic Neolithic communities. On the other hand, human remains from Körtik Tepe have so far revealed no significant differences between the sexes with respect to pathology, demographic parameters, and burial customs, and isotopic data have failed to identify non-local individuals buried at the site (Y. Erdal, personal communication). For this reason, alternative interpretations should probably be sought.

2 Any attempt to identify evidence for human sacrifice at Göbekli Tepe is made difficult by the absence of intact human burials at the site. As previously mentioned, human remains are not totally absent; currently, some 648 human skeletal fragments retrieved from the backfill of the enclosures have been analysed. Of these remains, the skull is the most frequently attested part of the body (N=404), followed by fragments of long bone from the lower extremities (N=130). Significantly, bones from the foot and the

hand, as well as fragments of spine, ribs, and pelvis, suggest that whole bodies were also originally buried, and not just a selection of long bones and skulls (*ossuaries*). However, it is emphasised that the exact origin of the backfill, comprising settlement waste and debris from feasting (and therefore also the provenance of the burials), is unknown. It was probably collected from the surrounding plateau. In other words, the content of the backfill bears no attestable links to the function of buried structures as sacrificial spaces or burial spots. On the other hand, we should not rule out that fragments of human skeleton could have been an intentional inclusion in the backfill material; this could have been the case with pieces of skull carrying post-mortem scrape marks. As already mentioned for Körtik Tepe, it is likely that these were made in the context of secondary burial rites.

In the context of human remains at Göbekli Tepe, we turn briefly to results from archaeozoological analyses. Remarkably, these are showing that birds of the corvid family constitute more than 50 per cent of the avifaunal assemblage from the site, a value unusual for a typical settlement situation, and indicative of favourable conditions for these species, also known for their carrion-eating behaviour (Peters et al. 2005: 231; cf. Dietrich and Notroff 2015: 85; Notroff et al. 2015). One scenario that comes to mind, albeit entirely speculative, is that the excarnation of human corpses took place at the site (Schmidt 2006b: 140). On the other hand, large amounts of refuse resulting from game dismembering and meat preparation and consumption during gatherings and events may have attracted these birds, which in turn became food animals themselves.

The only other evidence that might support the connection of Göbekli Tepe enclosures with human sacrificial activities stems from two other early PPN sites. At Jerf el Ahmar (Figure 5.1) a headless female skeleton was found lying sprawled on the floor of a circular (PPNA) communal structure (*bâtiment collectif*). It appears that the 15–18-year-old had been killed immediately prior to the destruction (by fire) of the semi-subterranean building in which she was found, its roof collapsing on the body. Subsequently, the head and connecting cervical vertebrae were removed (Stordeur and Abbé 2002; cf. Goring-Morris and Belfer-Cohen 2014: 45). At the Early Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (EPPNB) site of Nevalı Çori, there is evidence for what has previously been referred to as a foundation sacrifice (*Bauopfer*) (Hauptmann 1993: 57). Beneath the floor of House 21 there was found a crouched inhumation, again

of a young woman, with a flint point embedded in the neck and lower jaw. But how does the apparent preference for young female sacrifices at Jerf el Ahmar and Nevalı Çori fit with the dominant male symbolism observed at Göbekli Tepe? Certainly, no definitive answer can be given; however, this observation could reflect contextual variation between settlement and ritual sites. Be that as it may, sex and age appear to have been powerful markers of identity that structured people's lives and how they were treated (also as sacrificial victims) in early PPN society.

3 Moving on to a discussion of animal sacrifices, it must also be stressed that there is absolutely no evidence for the ritual killing of animals at Göbekli Tepe. The absence of skulls and presence of essentially meat-bearing parts of carcasses in the backfill of the enclosures is a clear sign that the animals were hunted and dismembered elsewhere. The only indications for animal sacrifice stem from the symbolic representations presented earlier in this chapter. Remarkably, there is also no evidence for the (public) display of bucrania, horns, antler, tusks, etc. which, following Girard, would imply that game species make the transition from objects of fear and hostility to ones of universal reverence, exerting a protective influence on the people living in the buildings or areas in which they are displayed. In this context, however, it should be noted that finds of bucrania and horns are certainly known from contemporaneous domestic sites, e.g. Hallan Çemi (Rosenberg and Redding 2000), Gusir Höyük (N. Karul, personal communication), and Jerf el Ahmar (Stordeur and Abbé 2002), and carved bucrania are found adorning T-pillars at Göbekli Tepe.

Finally, we are confronted with the question as to why the scapegoating of animals should either complement or indeed replace a human victim. Surrogating an animal for a human could imply that the sacrifice is a less costly alternative. However, following Girard, this argument does not hold: strictly speaking, there is no essential difference between animal sacrifice and human sacrifice, and in many cases one is substituted for the other. Our tendency to insist on differences that have little reality when discussing the institution sacrifice – our reluctance, for example, to equate animal with human sacrifice – is undoubtedly a factor in the extraordinary misunderstandings that still persist in that area of human culture (Girard 2013 [1972]: 11).

Accordingly, if there was no essential difference between human and animal sacrifice, the origin of all sacrifices must be the same (Girard 2013

[1972]: 109). This would also be implied if animal sacrifices were carried out in the same way, i.e. using the same methods, as human sacrifices. Furthermore, the equal status of human and animal might also be inferred from non-sacrificial elements, e.g. the veneration of particular totem animals (Girard 2013 [1972]: 223). On the other hand, human–animal relationships certainly changed in the course of the early Neolithic; indeed, already in the PPNA a more 'dominant' status of humans might be implied by the application of animal representations and symbolism upon the surfaces of the monolithic (anthropomorphic) T-pillars (Peters et al. 2014a: 176–177).

Summary

In this study a case has been made for a mimetic theoretical interpretation of evidence from the Upper Mesopotamian early PPN, based primarily on data from two prominent sites: Körtik Tepe and Göbekli Tepe in south-eastern Turkey. A lack of evidence for between-group fighting (warfare) in the early PPN is still poorly understood, especially as insights from ethnoarchaeological and cognitive evolutionary studies have emphasised the increased potential for contrary trends. Remarkably, whereas skeletal evidence from Körtik Tepe, Jerf el Ahmar, and Nevalı Çori has confirmed that PPN communities were certainly no strangers to interpersonal violence and possibly sacrifice, at Göbekli Tepe there is no evidence whatsoever for the ritual killing of humans or animals, albeit that there is a related symbolism with a clearly visible perpetrator–victim dichotomy.

On the other hand, it is equally important that other forms of conflict mitigation in the early PPN are not ruled out. Gatherings of different groups at the site and the communal efforts required for the construction of the enclosures would have fostered strong between-group bonds, enhanced by the shared emotions of participating in especially memorable acts. Without a doubt, Göbekli Tepe is a special site. It was a ritual place, a central point of orientation, a beacon in an expanse of time and space, a place where cultural memory was engraved in stone, and therefore the ideal platform for the diffusion of different types of important innovations, including in the long term the Neolithic package (Schmidt 2013a: 150; Peters et al. 2014a, 2014b). Now it appears that the Göbekli Tepe monuments might be assigned a further important purpose, that of a place of symbolic(?) sacrifice, and thus potential key players in 'keeping the peace' in the early

Neolithic. Therefore, in response to Gifford and Antonello (2015: 284): yes, it certainly appears that Girardean theory has a place at the table of further research initiated by Klaus Schmidt at Göbekli Tepe, and the theory is also finding some degree of confirmation in the 'descriptive and empirical' (Gifford and Antonello 2015: 272) data of archaeologists.

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6

Paired Leopards and Encircled Prey

Images of Rivalry and Sacrifice at Çatalhöyük

Mark R. Anspach

There is nothing wrong with violence as long as it is controlled.
US football coach Vince Lombardi

Two Types of Violence

It has long been thought that Çatalhöyük society was virtually violence-free. Ongoing research, including more careful analysis of human bone deposits, is obliging us to revise this assumption (see Chapter 4 this volume). It is true that excavations to date have not turned up the conspicuous signs of lethal combat associated with warlike societies. There are no crushed skulls, no human skeletons with obsidian projectile points lodged in them. On the other hand, there are a significant number of human crania that show clear signs of trauma from impact with a stone or blunt instrument. These injuries were sometimes serious, but – in the cases studied so far, at least – always stopped short of being fatal.

A similar pattern of healed depressed cranial fractures can be observed across Anatolia and the Near East throughout the Neolithic. According to Glencross and Boz (2014: 103), the consistent location, shape, and non-fatal outcome of these fractures "suggest that they are not accidental or random but most probably deliberate" (for the case of Körtik Tepe, where more than a third of the analyzed skulls display mostly small cranial injuries, see Chapter 5 this volume). The implication of this pattern of cranial fractures at Çatalhöyük is that intragroup violence existed but was not allowed to get out of hand. This raises the question as to how the potential for lethal conflict was managed in a

settlement where thousands of people lived closely packed together over long periods of time.

An idyllic picture of purely non-violent individuals is also hard to reconcile with the wall paintings found at Level V and above that show crowds of human figures surrounding and baiting bulls (aurochs), boars, bears, and deer. We know from feasting remains that at least some of these animals were hunted for their meat. However, the paintings depict much more than just hunting. They show people tormenting the encircled animals in an apparently ritualized fashion. What could explain the resort to ritualized violence against animals on the part of an otherwise comparatively non-violent people?

A possible answer to this question may be found in the anthropological theory of religion proposed by René Girard (1977) in his pioneering work *Violence and the Sacred*. Girard's approach suggests that it is overly simple and reductive to frame the problem solely in terms of an opposition between violence and non-violence. I will argue here that it is more useful and relevant to take as a starting point an opposition between *two types of violence*: spontaneously emerging, uncontrolled internal violence and violence that is ritually circumscribed or controlled.

For Girard, archaic religion is first and foremost a means of managing the threat that the spontaneous eruption of internal violence can pose to the survival of the community. Lethal violence between members of the same group is especially dangerous because of its tendency to escalate uncontrollably. In a stateless society – a society with no police or courts, no agent that can claim a monopoly on the legitimate use of force – an outbreak of internal violence may constitute a crisis that puts the very existence of the group at risk. As Cohen and Vandello emphasize, "People in such societies try to prevent violence because they believe long spirals of revenge will result from single acts of aggression. Thus, they try to avoid the triggering incidents that can bring on catastrophic blood feuds" (Cohen and Vandello 2004: 120).

In Girard's account, there are two opposite ways for a religious system to control internal violence. One is to establish prohibitions on violence (and forms of behavior that could lead to violence) between members of the community. The other is to provide for occasional or periodic sacrificial rituals that serve as safety valves. These rituals furnish a carefully controlled outlet for the expression of hostility, allowing collective aggression to be channeled against substitute victims – preferably ones whom no one will avenge – in a context that minimizes the risk of violence spilling over into everyday life within the community.

The primary evidence for the existence of such sacrificial rituals in Çatalhöyük culture comes from the aforementioned wall paintings of bulls, boars, or deer being baited by crowds of human figures, presumably as a prelude to being killed. A clear advantage of taking such wild animals as ritual victims is that nobody would avenge them – their death would not trigger reprisals within the group. Moreover, assuming the pictured scenes were enacted in real life, they would no doubt have taken place outside the settlement, at a safe distance from the ordinary domestic context.

The leopard skins worn by many of the men are an important ceremonial marker; given the apparent exclusion of leopard skins from the domestic living space (Hodder 2006), their presence in these scenes points to the transgressive character of the depicted violence and underscores the symbolic opposition between the ritual context and the ordinary domestic setting. This opposition is central to Girard's theory of religion. Indeed, one of the chief virtues of the Girardian account lies in its ability to elucidate a puzzling contradiction at the heart of archaic religious systems: the contradiction between the prohibitions of ordinary life and the acting out of their violation within the framework of ritual.

To modern eyes, ritually prescribed transgressions are among the more baffling features of such systems and seem to confirm their essentially arbitrary and capricious nature. For Girard, however, neither religious prohibitions nor sacrificial rituals are arbitrary constructions of the human mind. Instead, they have a firm grounding in reality. As we just saw, he holds that both serve to prevent a disastrous outbreak of internal violence, either by suppressing violence outright or by channeling it in a safe direction. Yet this makes it all the more imperative to explain the contradiction in question. If the prohibitions that govern everyday life are truly rooted in a need to head off real-life crises, why should the same rules be broken in the solemn context of a sacred ritual?

The apparent contradiction dissolves if one understands the ritual as enacting *the process by which one type of violence is transformed into another*. Girard observes that sacrificial rites frequently unfold in two stages, with the participants engaging in a mock battle or quarrel among themselves before joining together to direct their violence against a common target. There is nothing arbitrary about this sequence – it obeys a rigorous logic. Internal violence pitting members of the community against each other can be overcome if everyone turns their violence against the same victim. Indeed, in the absence of any higher authority able to impose peace, this may have been the only way to surmount destructive

internal strife in the earliest human groups. Girard hypothesizes that real-life crises were spontaneously resolved in this manner.

Violence is contagious. Once it erupts, it tends to spread, each act of violence provoking retaliatory acts that draw in more and more people. As the fighting degenerates into a general mêlée, everyone blames everyone else while behaving exactly like everyone else. The interaction of the participants is characterized by ever-greater reciprocity and symmetry. At the height of the crisis, they become indistinguishable doubles. But it is precisely the undifferentiated, interchangeable nature of the antagonists that allows a single victim to stand in for everyone else. Just as violence erupts and spreads spontaneously, so may it equally spontaneously converge on a common target. In this way, one type of violence is transformed into another. By joining together in attacking the same victim, the former antagonists are reconciled with each other. When the divisive violence of all-against-all gives way to the unifying violence of all-against-one, harmony is restored. This is what Girard calls the "surrogate victim mechanism" or scapegoat mechanism.

It is a mechanism in the sense that it can operate independently of any understanding or agreement on the part of those involved. They do not originally pile on to a common victim with the conscious aim of reconciling themselves; reconciliation emerges as an unexpected and unintended by-product of their actions. The next time crisis threatens, however, people may remember what happened before and deliberately seek to reproduce the sequence of events that so miraculously led to restored harmony the last time around. This, Girard suggests, is the origin of archaic rituals found the world over where – as in those apparently depicted in the wall paintings at Çatalhöyük – collective violence is deployed against isolated victims.

Surrogate Victim and Ritual Victim

Such rituals of collective violence are closest in form to the dimly remembered spontaneous events which, if Girard is right, served as the model for them. There are, however, crucial differences deriving from a retrospective misconstrual of the central role played in the dramatic resolution of the crisis by the surrogate victim. Since nobody present at the time grasped the real mechanism at work, the hapless victim would have been seen as uniquely responsible for the providential outcome, appearing after the fact as a larger-than-life figure endowed with superhuman power to bestow peace and unity on the group.

This characteristically distorted perception of the victim is clearly visible in the Çatalhöyük wall paintings where a besieged bull or stag looms disproportionately large compared with the diminutive human figures surrounding it. The outsized rendering of the animal reflects the outsized role attributed to it by the members of the crowd. In reality, the crowd would have dominated the victim, but in the artistic portrayal the power relationship is seemingly reversed: despite the indignities suffered by the animal, it still appears to dominate the crowd. By taking on to itself all the hostility and violence present in the group, the victim becomes a collective savior worthy of respect and adoration. The transformation of negative, divisive violence into positive, unifying violence is followed by the transformation of the scapegoat into a god.

The scapegoat mechanism is thus a *theogonic* mechanism, to borrow a term used by F. LeRon Shults (2014). In his contribution to a recent collection of articles on Çatalhöyük, Shults cites Girard as a source of inspiration, but he goes on to set up an opposition between Girard's scapegoat mechanism and theogonic mechanisms. According to Shults, the former "creates weak victims, more or less vulnerable, who must be cursed, sent away, or destroyed in order to rid the community of violence, sin or evil," while the latter "create powerful perpetrators, more or less invulnerable, who must be appeased in some way, in order to avoid misfortune or acquire blessing" (Shults 2014: 80). For Girard, however, these two figures are one and the same. Despite being initially weak and vulnerable, the scapegoat is already seen as a "powerful perpetrator" of evil; thanks to the spontaneous operation of the scapegoat mechanism, the victim proves itself to be a godlike fount of peace and blessing as well. The stunning wall paintings at Çatalhöyük constitute a spectacular revelation of the scapegoat mechanism as theogonic mechanism: they give us an unparalleled glimpse at the victim's posthumous apotheosis.

Although the same basic mechanism underlies both spontaneous acts of collective violence and their ritual reproduction, Girard insists on an important distinction between the original surrogate victim and the ritual victim. The latter stands at one remove from the former: the surrogate victim is a substitute for all the members of the group; the ritual victim is a substitute for the surrogate victim (Girard 1977: 101) and must therefore embody the two contradictory sides of that mythic figure. On the one hand, the surrogate victim came from within the group; on the other hand, the collective violence transformed it into an apparently transcendent force guiding events from without.

Logically, Girard notes, there are two possible ways to capture the two sides of this paradoxical being for which no exact counterpart exists in real life. If an actual member of the community is selected for sacrifice, than he or she must undergo ceremonial procedures of the kind typically employed to set ritual victims apart from everyone else. Conversely, if the victim actually comes from the outside, then steps must be taken to incorporate it into the community. Here Girard cites as examples the Tupinamba prisoner destined for sacrifice who is given a local bride, and domestic animals that are raised as part of the household before being ritually slaughtered.

What about the bulls, boars, bears, or stags pictured in the wall paintings at Çatalhöyük? It is not hard to see why these fearsome animals living in the wilderness might be perceived as embodying a powerful, extra-human, outside force – but, by the same token, it is difficult to imagine any figures more *unlike* the members of the human community. For these animals to serve as ritual victims, both sides of the equation must be satisfied. If the depicted scenes of collective violence are truly sacrificial rituals in Girard's sense, then, on the basis of his theoretical model, we would expect to find evidence that the inhabitants of Çatalhöyük somehow incorporated these same animals into their domestic setting. This expectation is amply vindicated.

Of course, it would hardly be practical to have wild beasts living at home with the family. But nothing would stop people from bringing back relics of the animals after they were slain and making them an integral part of the household. That is exactly what the inhabitants of Çatalhöyük did. They took cattle skulls, deer antlers, bear claws, or boar tusks into their homes and mounted them on walls or benches in the northern part of the house in what is believed to be the sleeping area. In this way, horns or skulls of the very same wild animals that periodically bore the brunt of the group's pent-up violence would also have been a constant presence in the most intimate part of the domestic setting. The bedroom literally became the "head quarters" of the sacrificial victim. As predicted by the Girardian model, this paradoxical figure served as the prototypical embodiment of inside and outside at once.

There is more to the story, however. The northern part of the house was not just the sleeping area. It was frequently also a place where, under the floor or raised platforms, the dead were buried. Much evidence suggests that this part of the house was in fact considered sacred. Its floor was made of white plaster and it was kept cleaner than the southern area (where food was prepared and cooked). It was

physically set on a higher plane. And it was generally where the skulls and horns of the slain animals were displayed in a manner befitting sacred relics.

The root meaning of the word "sacrifice" is to "make sacred." The bulls, boars, bears, and stags were made sacred by the violence of which they were the victims. This violence came from within – performed as it was by members of the group – but the potent unifying mechanism of all-against-one turned it into a seemingly transcendent force. As the only bulwark against the internal rivalries that can tear a primitive community apart, the exteriorized form of violence incarnated by the victim assumes an indispensable protective function. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that the inhabitants of Çatalhöyük would want to have the skulls, horns, or tusks of the sacrificed animals watch over the places where the dead rested and the living were made vulnerable by sleep.

I have now presented René Girard's theoretical model and tried to show how it can illuminate the significance of the bulls, boars, and deer that figure so prominently in paintings and wall installations at Çatalhöyük. In the next section, I will extend my analysis to a more mysterious beast whose elusive presence haunts Çatalhöyük art: the leopard.

Decoding the Leopard Imagery

There is something both compelling and tantalizing about leopards at Çatalhöyük. Leopard-like felines are the subject of visually striking artistic representations, especially wall reliefs. The wall paintings of victimized bulls, boars, bears, and deer also include human figures that seem to be wearing leopard skins, suggesting that leopards were endowed with ritual significance. One might therefore expect to find traces of leopard skins on the site. Archeologists infer the presence of skins from the bones of the limb extremities, but no such sets of bones have been found at Çatalhöyük. Indeed, the houses contain virtually no physical evidence of leopards. This absence must itself be significant. Remains of some other animals, such as bears, are also quite scarce. Still, the case of leopards stands out as especially enigmatic. If one measures the percentages of mammalian taxa found across different media, the prominence of leopards in artistic renderings places them at the very top of the scale, yet they are at the opposite end of the continuum when it comes to the presence of physical remains (see Hodder 2006: 9). Compared with the numerous skulls, horns, or tusks of other wild animals that feature in wall installations, the contrast is stark. In

the present section, I will try to explain this contrast in terms of the opposition between two types of violence outlined in the first section.

Let us begin by looking closely at the wall reliefs thought to depict leopards. These reliefs are intriguing from a Girardian viewpoint because they show paired animals facing off in a manner suggestive of the first type of violence described above, the reciprocal violence of rivalry. In the cases where the identification of the felines as leopards is most certain, they stand head to head. There are also images of similar animals going not just head to head but toe to toe, with their front paws extended and thrusting against each other in a gesture strongly evocative of fighting (Hodder 2006: 91).

James Mellaart (1967) imagined the paired leopards were male and female, but they do not display the difference in body size one would expect in leopards of opposite sex (Hodder 2006: 91). Instead, they are mirror images of each other – even their tails curl in identical fashion. Anke Kamerman stresses "the rigidity of their formal position," noting that not only their proportions and size, but even the patterns of spots upon their bodies, are "doubled by reflection symmetry" (Kamerman 2014: 304, 315). The patterns of spots, which are present in three of the four leopard pairs, vary from one pair to the other; indeed, the patterns even vary with each repainting of the same pair after it has been plastered over. Yet, Kamerman observes, every layer displays "a mirroring of the same spots on the two bodies" (2014: 320). I take this to mean that the specific configuration of spots was judged less important than the objective of maintaining the symmetry of the two spotted animals.

This symmetry would be less remarkable if it were a general stylistic feature of Çatalhöyük art. In that case, one might ascribe a purely aesthetic significance to it. However, such symmetry is absent from much of the other artwork on the site. Kamerman (2014: 304) cites the example of the vulture paintings, where "the central figure is asymmetric and figures are positioned much more freely." This comparison is especially telling because the vulture paintings belong to the same stratigraphic levels as the leopard reliefs. But a similar observation will hold for the paintings of bulls, boars, and deer discussed in the earlier sections of this chapter. In these images, too, the figures at the center of the crowd are asymmetric and all the figures are more freely positioned. The rigidly symmetrical rendering of the leopards thus marks a clear stylistic contrast with the "teasing and baiting" scenes of victimized animals.

Kamerman does find reflection symmetry in the depictions of one other animal, the bear. Like leopards, bears are represented in the form

of reliefs, and all the reliefs display a certain stylistic similarity despite a difference in the pose of the animals. The bears, Kamerman writes, "while single creatures, had their limbs positioned in angles of approximately 90 degrees and are therefore also represented in reflection symmetry on a horizontal and vertical axis" (Kamerman 2014: 316). The symmetry in the case of the bears is indeed striking. It is, however, incomplete, since it is limited to the limbs.

In fact, the symmetry only looks complete in the bear reliefs that are missing the head. In these reliefs, the splayed arms above repeat the splayed legs below, while the two limbs on the left side mirror the two limbs on the right. But the crucial discovery of a stamp seal with the head intact – which made it possible to identify the splayed figures as bears – also reveals an asymmetry that was not previously apparent. Not only is the vertical symmetry inevitably broken by the presence of the head on top, but the head itself is turned to one side, with the snout to the left and ears to the right, thus breaking the horizontal symmetry.

In any case, there is an important difference between the symmetry present in the bear reliefs and that of the leopard reliefs. As Kamerman notes, the bears are mostly represented singly; the symmetry is internal to the body of the individual bear. By contrast, the individual leopard does not in itself display reflection symmetry; the symmetry is a property of the leopard pair. More precisely, it defines the *relationship* between the leopards. Interestingly, there is one relief showing a pair of bears next to each other, but here the paired figures are not of the same sex. The juxtaposition of a male and female bear would appear to exemplify a complementary rather than symmetrical relationship between the animals.

The leopards are not simply standing next to each other; they are positioned *facing* one another. Emphasizing that this pose is unique to the leopards, Kamerman suggests that it is much more than a mere visual effect. "Facing," she explains, is inseparable from behavior:

> Human bodies or faces are only symmetrical when people are facing each other … This positioning goes together with proximity and the possibility of reflecting each other's conduct. Reflection symmetry, therefore, is not only a way of formal positioning; it has also an iconic (re-presentative) relation with human behavior.
> (Kamerman 2014: 316)

What kind of behavior will lead two individuals to "reflect each other's conduct," so that each will resemble the other as fully as the paired leopards in the reliefs at Çatalhöyük resemble each other? Kamerman

does not say so, but the only behavior that could produce such perfect resemblance is mutual imitation.

This leads us back to René Girard. For Girard, mutual imitation between two individuals tends to lead to rivalry and conflict. This may seem counterintuitive insofar as we spontaneously associate imitation with harmony rather than discord. Yet the intimate link between imitation and rivalry is hardly a secret. It is present in the familiar notion of "emulation." According to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, to emulate is to "try to equal or excel"; to "rival"; to "imitate zealously." Imitation and rivalry are mutually reinforcing. Once imitation leads to emulation and rivalry, the rivalry itself pushes the antagonists to imitate each other even more zealously. Every move made by either party will be met with an equal and opposite countermove. "Conflict feeds on symmetry and it renders symmetry ever more exact," writes Girard (2004: 77). The rivals become symmetrical doubles.

The reflection symmetry of the leopard reliefs perfectly captures the phenomenon described by Girard. The two animals are mirror images of each other and their bodies are apparently poised for combat. They are "doubled by reflection symmetry" because they embody the reciprocal violence of symmetrical doubles. Nothing differentiates the leopards; each is a twin of the other. The conjunction of violence and rivalry with symmetry and identity is significant. It evokes precisely the kind of crisis that sacrificial rituals are designed to avert, a crisis triggered by the catastrophic eruption of internal violence and marked by the symmetry of identical reprisals.

The iconic properties that Kamerman associates with the formal positioning of the leopards – "proximity and the possibility of reflecting each other's conduct" – are characteristic of those living together within the same community, the same family, the same household. The violence most feared by stateless societies is the violence of those who are closest to one another, the fratricidal violence that can tear a group apart from within.

Clyde Kluckhohn identifies the struggle between brothers as the most common type of conflict found in mythology (Kluckhohn 1968: 52; cited in Girard 1977: 61). The Egyptian god Osiris is slain by his brother Seth just as Abel is by Cain. The two sons of Oedipus, Eteocles and Polyneices, kill each other. Romulus murders Remus for leaping defiantly over a half-built wall raised on the future border of Rome. The founders of the city were not merely brothers, but twins, which, as Livy (1960: 40) explains, precluded any determination of seniority. Their dispute was rooted in their very identity, in the impossibility of distinguishing between them.

"In some primitive societies twins inspire a particular terror," Girard observes. "It is not unusual for one of the twins, and often both, to be put to death" (Girard 1977: 56). Victor Turner describes similar practices in many African societies. Among the Ashanti, he says, twins are taken from their family and given to the chief, but "twins born in the royal family itself are killed ... presumably because twins would introduce contradiction into the structure of the royal matrilineage, giving rise to problems of succession, inheritance, and precedence" (Turner 1977: 46). In short, royal twins are bound to be rivals: here Turner's analysis echoes Livy's.

The resort to sometimes drastic measures demonstrates the extent to which non-differentiation is perceived as a harbinger of crisis. The Nyakyusa fear the birth of twins and, though they spare their lives, they prescribe special rituals the aim of which, Turner explains, is "to rid twins and their parents of the dangerous contagiousness of their condition" (Turner 1977: 48). What is the nature of this contagiousness? "Twins are impure in the same way that a warrior steeped in carnage is impure," remarks Girard (1977: 58). A warrior returning from battle must often undergo purifying rituals before resuming his place in the community. Violence is treated as if it were a contagious disease that must be isolated to keep it from spreading. In societies where the very existence of twins is deemed an intolerable danger, the use of direct physical violence against them is seen as equally dangerous. To avoid any risk of contamination, the infants are simply abandoned in harsh conditions where they can be expected to perish on their own (Girard 1977: 57). Here one may again cite the example of Romulus and Remus, left to die on the floodwaters of the Tiber (Livy 1960: 38).

If twins are sometimes banished from the community because their mere presence conjures up the specter of reciprocal violence, what might this suggest to us about the status of leopards at Çatalhöyük? In the leopard reliefs, the paired creatures are portrayed not just as identical doubles or "twins," but as twins conspicuously poised to attack each other. The represented animals would seem to embody, much more clearly than helpless twin babies, the type of reciprocal violence that poses a terrifying threat to the community. One might therefore anticipate that any trace of real leopards would have been deliberately excluded from the settlement at Çatalhöyük. As was hinted earlier, this may well have been the case. We will return to this point below.

Why should leopards in particular be associated with the kind of violence inimical to society? Not only are they ferocious killers, unlike some other predators such as hyenas they are also distinctly antisocial. Male

leopards keep to themselves. But when two leopards do meet at the border of their respective territories, they are known to fight. Like Romulus, a leopard will not hesitate to kill a rival who oversteps the boundary.

Before going any further, I should mention one puzzling feature of the leopard reliefs that can easily be overlooked. At first glance, the leopards all appear to be going head to head in the same manner. All four pairs display the same symmetry. On closer inspection, however, one notices that only the unspotted leopards are truly shown "eyeball to eyeball." In the other three pairs, as Anke Kamerman points out, the heads of the facing leopards are turned away from each other and towards the viewer (Kamerman 2014: 317). Any interpretation should try to account for this detail. It suggests that the leopards, however ferocious, may not fight to the death after all. Something appears to have distracted them from their confrontation – but what? It would be premature to venture a guess at this stage of the analysis. There is a limit to what one can glean from a close study of the leopard reliefs alone. We need to put them into the context of other evidence from Çatalhöyük in order to gain a fuller picture.

Let us consider once more the wall paintings that depict the ritualized teasing of wild beasts. In these scenes, some of the human figures seem to be wearing leopard skins, but leopards are never shown as victims. Instead, the victims are always other large, dangerous wild animals: bulls, boars, bears, or stags. In his paper on Çatalhöyük, René Girard (2008) interprets these scenes of collective violence as sacrificial rituals. He draws particular attention to the change in the status of the victims brought about by the ritual itself. First they are treated with ostentatious disrespect – they are subjected to poking and kicking, their tongues and tails are pulled – before being killed and eaten. But then something mysterious takes place: the disrespect gives way to veneration.

The ritual seems to have produced a dramatic reversal in the symbolic significance of the victim: "Its collective death turns the animal into an object of worship for the very people who had vilified it" (Girard 2008: 17). The proof is that the dangerous parts of the animal, such as horns and antlers, are brought back as relics and installed on the wall in the most sacred part of the house, the place where people are buried. "Horns and antlers are the natural weapons of these animals," Girard observes. They are what make them dangerous. The shift in their value "from the negative to the positive, from the *nefas* to the *fas* is the most mysterious thing" about the whole business. But of course, this mysterious transformation in the symbolic import of the scapegoat is hardly limited to Çatalhöyük; it is, Girard writes, the "essential enigma of archaic

religion," and it can be explained by the special character "not of violence in general but of unanimous violence against a common enemy, the violence that brings back the peace all societies need in order to flourish" (Girard 2008: 12–13).

Girard says nothing in his paper about leopards. They are in fact treated very differently from bulls, stags, or boars. Cattle skulls, deer antlers, and boar tusks were brought back to the site and used in wall installations. A bear paw found in a side room had plaster on it, indicating it may also have been attached to a wall (Hodder 2006: 199). On the other hand, virtually no leopard bones (or bones of other large wild cats) have been found on the site. The only exception – a single perforated leopard claw – was discovered not inside a living space, but buried with a skeleton under the foundation of a building. This find confirms that leopards existed in the region at the time, thus making the general absence of leopard remains on the site even more striking (Hodder 2006: 148, 259–260). How can we explain the disparate treatment of leopards? If they were ritually important, as the art suggests, why were their bones not brought back to the site and displayed as sacred relics?

Although Girard does not address these questions himself, he gives us a useful way to think about them. He tells us that relics of certain animal species were introduced into the houses because they embody a *positive, protective, unifying* form of violence. Logically, then, if leopards were not brought back to the houses, that might be because they are identified with a *negative, threatening, divisive* form of violence. As we saw in the first section of the present chapter, the existence of such an opposition between two types of violence is a fundamental tenet of Girardian theory. The negative type that threatens the peace of the community is the reciprocal violence of symmetrical doubles. In the previous section, I argued that this is precisely the type of violence represented in the leopard reliefs. Thus, the various elements of the analysis converge. If leopards are associated with the fratricidal violence that can tear a community apart from within, it is not surprising that they should be excluded from people's homes.

We still have to account for the spotted loincloths worn by some of the human figures in the scenes of ritualized collective violence. If leopard skins are not allowed in the house, why should people don them for the ceremony? In reality, it is not unusual to find the rules of everyday life violated in a ritual context. Girard explains this phenomenon by tracing rituals back to an origin in dimly remembered real-life crises. Rituals operate on a different principle from prohibitions. The latter are designed

to avert a new crisis by nipping in the bud anything – perhaps even something as seemingly harmless as the birth of twins – that recalls the original crisis. By contrast, a ritual may try to reproduce the entire chain of events leading from the crisis to its resolution. In other words, as we saw in the opening section, sacrificial rituals may be understood as reenacting the process by which one type of violence is transformed into another.

Often, Girard says, the ritual will unfold in two phases, with the participants staging a mock battle or quarrel among themselves before turning their violence in unison against the victim. The hostile symmetry of the first phase gives way to an asymmetrical assault on a single target. Girard assigns to the first phase not only mock battles but "all the ritual dances whose formal symmetry is reflected in a perpetual confrontation between the performers" (Girard 1977: 98). In the baiting scenes at Çatalhöyük, Ian Hodder has discerned a "narrative dimension" that, I would argue, corresponds remarkably well to the Girardian schema: human figures in rows dance in an orderly manner, then flail wildly around the beast (Hodder 2006: 142).

In fact, the orderly figures are lined up in two parallel rows, so that their dance displays the "formal symmetry" invoked by Girard. This symmetry characterizes the part of the ritual that the human participants perform on their own, apart from their animal prey. The symmetry dissolves when they turn their attention to an animal, coming at it from all directions and tormenting it with gleeful abandon. Together, these component parts of the ritual form a meaningful whole: they reenact the metamorphosis of symmetrical confrontation into the unanimous violence that reconciles the collectivity at the expense of a sacrificial victim.

It should now be clearer why the human participants in the ritual assume the identity of leopards: they do so *precisely because* leopards embody the divisive violence that must be neutralized through sacrifice. If the ritual is meant to replicate an original crisis and its resolution, the participants must begin by miming the fearful symmetry of the doubles. At the height of the crisis, Girard says, the members of the community "are transformed into 'twins', matching images of violence" (Girard 1977: 79). That is exactly what the twin beasts in the leopard reliefs are: matching images of violence. And that is also what the twin rows of leopard men in the painting are.

If this interpretation is correct, the symmetrical dance of the leopard men would have constituted a preliminary phase of the ritual, one that took place before the sacrifice of the animals. But how can one know whether this part of the ritual was actually performed first? My argument

presumes a temporal sequence that has yet to be confirmed. So far, I have focused on establishing a correspondence between the two types of ritual action depicted at Çatalhöyük and the two successive ritual phases predicted by Girard's schematic model. To make the demonstration complete, one would need to reconstruct a temporal sequence based on internal clues in the wall paintings themselves.

At first glance, a bewildering succession of images sprawl helter-skelter across the four walls of House FVI (often termed the "Hunting Shrine" by Mellaart). Deciphering them in their entirety may be an impossible task. Indeed, there is no reason to think that they all form a single, continuous sequence. However, immediately adjacent to the paired rows of leopard men, a well-defined sequence does seem to emerge. Crowds of human figures encircle a series of game animals belonging to the four species by now familiar to us: bear, boar, deer, and aurochs. The spatial distribution of those animals does not appear random. Instead, they seem to be arranged according to a very simple ordering principle: as one moves from right to left, the baited animals grow progressively larger. On the bottom right is a modestly sized bear; above it and slightly to the left is a somewhat bigger boar. A relatively small number of human figures seem to be weaving around both these animals at once. To their left, one encounters two stags of more imposing stature. Finally, to the left of the stags and bigger yet, one arrives at two enormous bulls.

When it comes to animal sacrifice, physical size is far from an arbitrary criterion. The size of the victim is usually a reliable index to the importance of the sacrifice. As a rule, a chicken is a less valuable victim than a pig, a pig less valuable than an ox. If more than one sacrifice is to be performed, the sequence will likely reflect the relative importance of the victims, with the smallest slain in the opening act and the largest, most valuable animals saved for last. So it may have been at Çatalhöyük. A sequence of sacrifices would have begun with the bear or boar and built to a climax, with the massive aurochs constituting the *pièce de résistance*. It follows that the series of animal-baiting scenes in these sections of the wall art may be read as a temporal sequence moving from right to left and culminating in the bulls.

Now, let us switch directions and retrace our steps, starting out from the bulls and moving back, left to right, until we reach the boar and small bear. What do we find to the right of these two animals (near the bear and on the same level as the boar), at the very beginning of the sequence? Not another animal-baiting scene, but the two parallel rows of dancing human figures clad in leopard skins. It follows that the symmetrical dance

of the leopard men was most likely an opening ceremony, taking place before the baiting and killing of the animals.

The paired rows of leopard men are a living echo of the pairs of menacing felines depicted in the wall reliefs. The reliefs thus give us the key to the meaning of the leopard skins seen in the wall paintings. When they perform their roles in the ritual, the hunters of Çatalhöyük temporarily adopt the guise of dangerous leopards. But when they return home bearing the skulls of their prey, they must leave their leopard identity behind.

One particular physical characteristic of the reliefs may allow us to link them even more closely to the men who imitate leopards by putting on their skin. As noted earlier, the reliefs are repeatedly plastered over and painted again. Anke Kamerman (2014) offers a very interesting comment on this process. She argues that the skin of the represented animals is, in effect, detachable:

> with each new layer the "leopards" are stripped by the act of putting a uniform layer of plaster on top of the previous one, and subsequently "dressed up" with a new pattern of spots. So it appears that, in the reliefs, the articulated "skin" is relatively detached from the body. What can we say about this? The material evidence suggests the act of stripping the skin and adopting a new one. This might be compared to the later paintings of the hunting scenes … for after all, the humans have to strip the skin off the leopard to be able to wear it.
>
> (Kamerman 2014: 320)

These observations are highly suggestive, yet I would draw a slightly different conclusion. A leopard's skin is stripped from the animal once and for all, but the humans who wear the skin can take it off and put it on again repeatedly. Rather than comparing the leopards in the reliefs to the animals who lose their pelts, it seems more apt to liken them to the men who don leopard skins in the ritual and then strip them off when the ceremony is over.

In the end, the figures in the reliefs may not represent real leopards at all. Instead, they might best be seen as stylized images of the ritual persona adopted by the men who wear the leopard skins. If that is the case, it may be possible to extrapolate backwards from the ritual to shed light on one of the most puzzling features of the reliefs. Why are the three pairs of spotted leopards shown with their heads turned away from each other? What has interrupted their face-to-face confrontation? And who are they looking at – the viewer of the relief, or some unseen third party?

We are now ready to imagine a possible solution to this puzzle. It is necessarily only a conjecture, but one that flows logically from the rest

of the analysis. There are two stages to the ritual, I suggested. In the first stage, the men in leopard skins mime a symmetrical conflict between doubles. If this conflict were allowed to follow its course, it would end in reciprocal violence. But in the second stage, the conflict is defused through the transformation of reciprocal violence into unanimous violence. The pivotal moment – the literal *turning point* – comes when the rivals turn away from each other and direct their attention toward a common target. This turning point is perfectly captured by the swiveled heads of the spotted leopards.

Could it be that the reliefs in question are meant to have a protective or apotropaic function? That is quite possible, but the two interpretations dovetail neatly: the leopards would be dangerous to an intruder precisely because they threaten to turn their violence in his direction.

Coda: Why There are No Bucrania at Göbekli Tepe

In this chapter, I have sought to show how René Girard's mimetic model can help unlock the mysteries of Çatalhöyük religion. Taking the opposition between two types of violence as a key, we have begun deciphering the logic behind the faunal installations and the animal imagery in the wall art at Çatalhöyük. I would like to conclude by extending the analysis to a perplexing aspect of the ceremonial enclosures at Göbekli Tepe in order to indicate how the same principles might shed light on broader issues concerning the role of ritual in the transition to sedentism at the dawn of the Neolithic.

This brief excursus will take us from central to southeastern Turkey and require us to travel even further back in time. However, Ian Hodder and Lynn Meskell (2011) have highlighted significant continuities in the symbolic repertoires of Çatalhöyük and Göbekli that exist alongside the unquestionable differences between the two sites. One of these continuities involves the predominance of wild and dangerous animals and an emphasis on the hard and pointed parts of their bodies, such as talons, horns, or tusks. Lee Clare and his colleagues explore the animal imagery at Göbekli in their contribution to the present volume (Chapter 5), proposing that it may be related to sacrificial practices.

In particular, Clare et al. point to a dramatic portrayal of the death of two aurochs. This scene engraved on a pillar at Göbekli calls to mind the Çatalhöyük wall painting depicting the baiting of an aurochs. Accordingly, Clare et al. raise the possibility of a long-term continuity, spanning three millennia, in the artistic representation and perhaps even

the act of bull-baiting. Yet they also underscore an important difference with respect to Çatalhöyük: "the bucrania, often associated with post-sacrificial reverence, are missing." Although "carved depictions of bucrania are found adorning some of the T-pillars at the site," there are no installations of actual bucrania.

Here, then, is a riddle that any Girardian interpretation of the data from Göbekli must confront. If, as the artwork suggests, bulls were a part of the sacrificial cult, then where are the bucrania? This riddle is not unlike the one we encountered earlier regarding leopards at Çatalhöyük. If, as the artwork suggests, they were a part of the sacrificial cult, then why have no remains of leopards been found inside buildings on the site? The two riddles are practically mirror images of each other: carved depictions of leopards but no leopard skulls or teeth at Çatalhöyük; carved depictions of aurochs and bucrania but no aurochs skulls or horns at Göbekli.

In the case of Çatalhöyük, I proposed a solution based on an opposition between two types of violence: a negative, threatening kind symbolized by the leopard and a positive, protective kind embodied by the aurochs and other game species such as boars or deer. The leopards play a necessary but sinister role in the sacrificial cult. They represent the *source* of violence while the other animals are primarily its object. An aurochs, stag, or boar is certainly dangerous when aroused – and the baiting it undergoes brings out its aggressiveness – but the animal's sacrificial death metamorphoses it into a force for peace and unity. That is why the sacrificers bring the horns and skull of the victim home with them when the ritual is over.

The opposition between two kinds of animal is correlated with a polarity between the ritual context and the ordinary domestic setting. During the ritual, Çatalhöyük men play the role of dangerous predators, but they must do so at a safe distance from the place they live. Sacrifice lets them give free rein to a lethal force that would be disastrous if unleashed in the heart of the community. When they come home, I argued that they must leave their leopard identity behind. The process of exteriorizing violence thus entails a back-and-forth movement between the place the ritual is held and the domestic space where the relics of the victim are displayed.

Now, how would the same logic play out in the case of Göbekli Tepe? Before answering this question, one must first recognize that a direct analogy with Çatalhöyük is not possible. The reason is that the two sites stand at opposite ends of the polarity between ritual and domestic settings. At Çatalhöyük, all the buildings discovered so far

seem to be houses of similar scale and design. There are no monumental buildings or building complexes suitable for collective rituals. At Göbekli, by contrast, few if any houses have been discovered. Monumental architecture dominates the site to such an extent that Klaus Schmidt saw it exclusively as a gathering place for collective rituals organized by people coming from elsewhere. To be sure, the arduous process of erecting the massive stone structures may well have required spending some time living on or near the site. A small area of the site has recently yielded the first possible indications of domestic activity (see Clare et al. 2018). Nonetheless, there can be little doubt that the stone circles and megalithic pillars – especially the most imposing ones found at the earliest levels – were created for ritual rather than residential purposes (but see Banning 2011; for a reply to Banning, see Dietrich and Notroff 2015).

Unlike Çatalhöyük, then, Göbekli may not originally have been built as a settlement. Rather, in Schmidt's compelling vision, it could have served as a "ritual center" where "people from surrounding settlements came together on specific occasions." The participants in the rites at Göbekli would likely have come from sites like Çayönü, Nevali Çori, Jerf el Ahmar, and other sites in the region where archeologists have discovered smaller representations of symbols found at Göbekli on a monumental scale (Schmidt 2005: 14–15). It is the inhabitants of those communities who would have taken part in a back-and-forth movement between the place of ritual and the domestic space.

Let us now return to the puzzle of the missing bucrania. At Göbekli, Clare et al. tell us (Chapter 5), there is "no evidence for the (public) display of bucrania, horns, antler, tusks, etc. which following Girard would imply that the game species make the transition from objects of fear and hostility to ones of universal reverence, exerting a protective influence on the people living in the buildings or areas in which they are displayed." We can explain this apparent anomaly by combining Girard's hypotheses with those of Schmidt.

If, as Schmidt contended, Göbekli served as a ritual center for the inhabitants of surrounding communities, and if, as Girard posited, the bucrania and horns of the victims are transformed into objects that exert a protective influence over the domestic space where people live, then one would not expect to find those objects displayed at Göbekli. Instead of leaving such relics at the site, people would have brought them home with them. And that is surely what they did. For, as Clare et al. note (Chapter 5), bucrania and horns have been discovered at

contemporaneous domestic sites including Hallan Çemi, Gusir Höyük, and Jerf el Ahmar in the region around Göbekli.

No bucrania have been found in the stone circles at Göbekli itself because, as Schmidt sensed, they are not meant to be places of human habitation. There is scarcely anything domestic about them. The pillars teem with depictions of creatures that evoke fear and hostility such as scorpions, spiders, and snarling predators. We would argue that, much like the leopards of Çatalhöyük, these dangerous animals represent a savage, threatening form of violence incompatible with domestic life. According to Girard, sacrificial rituals remove this negative type of violence from the community and convert it into the positive, protective form embodied by the bucrania and horns of the victim – the objects of post-sacrificial reverence destined for display in the homes of the participants.

The absence of bucrania from the ritual enclosures at Göbekli and their presence in surrounding communities provide dramatic empirical confirmation of the Girardian model and demonstrates its broader relevance for the study of early Neolithic religious systems. In turn, this model offers a framework for interpreting the data that bolsters Klaus Schmidt's conception of Göbekli Tepe as a primarily non-domestic ritual center.

Lee Clare and his colleagues suggest that the ritual practices associated with the site served to mitigate conflict. They will have done so by exteriorizing violence. In my view, the need to remove violence from the community may help explain the construction of special ritual sites away from the areas where people settled. Schmidt postulates that "special cult services took place in such places, presumably in conjunction with a certain control and domination of those present" (Schmidt 2005: 13). What was it that most urgently required control and domination, if not violence of the very kind channeled in sacrificial cult practices?

In the transition to sedentism, rituals held at special sites could have afforded a controlled outlet for the violence that otherwise might threaten to tear communities apart from within. The opposition between domestic and ritual sites in the early Neolithic may thus be a translation in spatial terms of the opposition between two types of violence analyzed here. By the time of the settlement at Çatalhöyük, one observes a new tendency to forgo the construction of special ritual buildings. I have suggested elsewhere how a mimetic dynamic may help account for this reverse trend (Anspach 2018). Nevertheless, the sacrificial rituals with wild animals depicted in the Çatalhöyük wall paintings would likewise have taken place outside the settlement.

From the snarling predators of Göbekli Tepe to the rivalrous leopards of Çatalhöyük, the stunning animal imagery found on both sites conceals an underlying human drama: the struggle of our ancestors to master their own violence.

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PART III

THE DIALECTICS OF MIMESIS

7

Mimetic Theory, the Wall Paintings, and the Domestication, De-domestication, and Sacrifice of Cattle at Çatalhöyük

William A. Johnsen

In *Violence and the Sacred* (1972), René Girard follows Evans-Pritchard's hard-won wisdom ("cherchez la vache") which says that whenever you need to understand some complexity of Nuer culture, you must look to what they do with their cattle. It was perhaps inevitable that Girard would discuss religion at Çatalhöyük by seeing the famous wall paintings as depicting animal sacrifices. What can we learn about religion at Çatalhöyük if we follow Girard's attention to the role of cattle?

The Bouphonia of ancient Greece is perhaps the best-known and attested example of ancient bull sacrifice, which has innumerable and elaborate built-in lustrations to absolve the participants from guilt and retribution. As summarized by the classical scholar Walter Burkert (Burkert 1983), the bull that first moves forward to eat the grain on the altar has chosen himself for sacrifice, and, as if in answer to the cue given of a timely sprinkling of water on the bull's head, he even nods in agreement to his own immolation. Whatever guilt is attached to the violence done to the bull is handed off, sloughed off from the humans themselves afterwards, by punishing and then exiling their bloody instruments of execution. The Bouphonia's recognition of the violence within the ritual is a significant stage in the historical evolution of sacrifice.

But such elaborate frictionless guilt-proofing mechanisms are greatly facilitated by perhaps eight thousand years of previous domestication of cattle into complaisant companions and victims of humans. What role did cattle play in Çatalhöyük? Any interpretation of faunal remains at Çatalhöyük seems predestined to proceed in waves, where a new point of certainty is attested, then pushed back a little by counter-arguments and new data, only to come further forward and further establish itself. At

the time of the famous Çatalhöyük wall paintings, were cattle or aurochs domesticated or wild or both? Were they primarily hunted or culled? Were they reserved for feasts only, or (a small) part of the diet (or both)? Did their eventual pacification proceed "from-the-ground-up" domesticating of Çatalhöyük's own local cattle, by migration of domesticated herds from elsewhere, or by infusion of domesticated cattle from other regions into wild local cattle, or by trade, or some combination of many or all of the above? There appears to be a consensus emerging over the past ten years that the lack of phenotypic changes among the faunal remains indicates that cattle were not yet qualitatively domesticated in the early levels of Çatalhöyük, but the irreversible moment of domestication which led to positive traces by the upper levels and the West Mound has been understandably difficult to determine more precisely (Russell et al. 2005; Russell et al. 2013).

The expectation of an eventual consensus over when cattle domestication emerged at Çatalhöyük opens up an equally important question beyond the immediate practical circumstances of diet and nutrition. Beginning in *Violence and the Sacred* (1977 [1972]), Girard argues that the domestication of cattle and other "domestic arts" began in keeping animals for religious sacrifice, and their practical uses were recognized afterwards, not in anticipation or planned development for several generations to benefit from it in the future. Girard is not alone in this position of reversing the usual sequence of religion as superstructure to an economic base. Erich Isaac (Isaac 1962) reaffirmed Eduard Hahn's position (Hahn 1896, 1911) that domestication of cattle originates in religion, which needs a holding of cattle for sacrifice, that cattle as cart animals first pulled religious carts, and that castration of bulls was first for religious purposes, not for pacification, following what was first done to human victims. More recently, Jacques Cauvin (2000) has also argued for setting religion before domestication and sedentarism. If the domestication of wildlife (including agriculture) has a religious origin, then we need to investigate domestication and religion as entangled phenomena.

Further, Girard's theory of religion as the primary and necessary agency of hominization, social survival, and cohesion is well suited to bring religion to bear on the ultimate question of Çatalhöyük in the longue durée of human evolution: what inspired this incredible and precociously large aggregation of inhabitants and made possible their remarkable conformity of living conditions, their "aggressive egalitarianism" (Hodder 2006), and what later made it no longer viable as it separated into two, then dispersed over time?

To see the famous wall paintings of Çatalhöyük as depicting a community's agitation (Hodder 2006) rather than pacification of a menacing bull (or stag or boar), which is alive or perhaps dying (but still erect), as a contrary effort towards "de-domestication" is both tempting and dangerous, if not quite as dangerous as taunting a bull. Whether domesticated or wild, whether attempting to tame a bull or hunt it, teasing is contra-indicated, even now. The protocols of hunting or herding cannot explain what we see in these wall paintings. Only a religious interpretation can account for what we see.

If we assume that the teasing is rather an attempt to ritually draw out and absorb the power or being of the bull by some process of sympathetic magic, there is still the problem of how a bull will react to such behavior. Presumably, to assume the bull's power it is not enough to run one's hand over the bull once he is dead (powerless), but rather it is necessary to touch him when he is frenzied. In any case, this is not the way of pacification and domestication.

When the Imitatio research group visited Göbekli Tepe in July 2014, Lee Clare suggested to us that a depiction of a bowed bull that he showed us on one of the stele (such as appears as well in the wall painting at Çatalhöyük) is the stance of a dying animal (see Chapters 5 and 6 this volume). If the animal is dying, perhaps the painting catches the moment of transition when the humans prevail over this large and dangerous animal, when the surrounding crowd is "bullying" him to death.

But is the bull already dead, as Lewis-Williams (2005) suggests? I can imagine a crowd pretending to bully or kill an already dead bull (stuffing, reconstituting the sacrificed bull, is also part of the Bouphonia), perhaps as a later re-creation of an earlier ritual event, but I cannot imagine why this "pretense" that the bull is alive would be revealed in a wall painting. And what is it about the painting that can assure us that the bull is "already" dead?

Of course our speculation cannot determine an unambiguous line of development from the rate of cattle domestication at Çatalhöyük, the significance of its similarity to bull sacrifice, and Minoan bull-jumping all the way up to European bull-fighting, which is only now disappearing, and what the paintings depict. However, we take heart from the late and lamented Walter Burkert, who said of the many compelling but incomplete correlations between ancient Near East artifacts and customs, and archaic Greece, that the least likely hypothesis was that these innumerable enticing parallels were sheer coincidence – that they had nothing to do with each other (Burkert 1992).

If ritual in general such as the Bouphonia requires an elaborate choreography which must be carefully repeated to be efficacious, if it depends on a subject pliable in his movements, any ritual involving a wild bull will rather have to incorporate his resistance to manipulation into its scheme or risk failure. In his lecture on the wall paintings (Girard 2008, 2015) Girard disagreed with Ian Hodder's (2006) identification of the activity surrounding the bull as teasing. Girard thought this reading interfered with an interpretation of the wall paintings as sacrifice.

But perhaps teasing indicates instead that bulls were becoming less wild, less likely to perform their historical resistance to sacrifice, as in an earlier form of ritual where they stand as the fearful opposing center of a chaotic whirling mêlée of violence, and now they needed encouragement to behave as wild bulls had done formerly, in order to reveal their "latent" hostility to humankind.

This opens the possible staging of a sequence, that (1) "teasing" marks at least schematically if not historically, the interim moment of transition between the ritual use of wild and then more pacific if not domesticated bulls; (2) it marks this interim as a middle stage on the way to the irreversible moment of cattle domestication, facing in both directions; and (3) it marks, therefore, a stage between an older, more imagistic ritual (using Harvey Whitehouse's (2004) terms) and a ritual or rituals becoming more doctrinal in format.

How might we deploy Whitehouse's imagistic and doctrinal modes of religiosity to characterize this sequence? Based on a careful reading of the anthropological accounts as well as original, contemporary field research in surviving hunter-gatherer cultures, Whitehouse hypothesizes that there are two dominant modes of archaic religiosity. One set of ritual practices is unpunctual, as much riot as rule, very dangerous, a total experience of misrule finally resolving in peace. Whitehouse defines this *imagistic* mode as a low-frequency high-intensity experience; the *doctrinal* mode is high-frequency low-intensity, a set of lower-grade punctual practices and prohibitions of lesser cost. Harvey Whitehouse and Ian Hodder speculate that sometimes these modes might co-exist (Whitehouse and Hodder 2010). As I will show, mimetic theory can explain this co-presence as a relation and sequence it in a developmental procedure.

Finally, (4) the wall painting marks an interim between two radically different meanings of sacrifice, a change in sacrifice from focusing on a *scapegoat* (an enemy subject accused of violating the community, according to the community, and then expelled from the community) to a more modern form of sacrifice, the perfect unblemished *offering up* to

some external god or force. This transition from expulsion to offering would give a genealogy and a sequence to this difference of intentions and method in sacrifice, firmly and elegantly distinguished by Beate Pongratz-Leisten (2012), as well as disarming the frequent early dismissal of Girard's model for sacrifice because it only focuses on sacrifice as ritual killing, and ignores sacrifice as offering.

Therefore, this teasing or baiting of the bull is in fact well within René Girard's explanation of sacrifice, which discusses many examples attested in the anthropological literature where future ritual victims need preparation to achieve just the right proximity and distance to stand as its substitute victim, both for and against the community, as its hero and as its enemy: captured enemy warriors need to be integrated into the community by marriage (domesticated) before they are sacrificed; members inside the community need to be alienated (de-domesticated), made culpable, before they are sacrificed (Girard 1977 [1972]).

The wall paintings at Çatalhöyük show agitated crowds encouraging a monstrous-sized bull to be still more threatening. Bulls are dangerous, even now, but they have never been predators of humankind. Less often commented on is a transcribed image (Hodder 2006) from Level V, which shows, below the baiting of a stag, to the viewer's right, a woman bent over, sexually inciting, enticing a boar. Boars are dangerous to us, even now, but not as sexual predators, yet the female figure near the stag who addresses the boar *rere regardant* (twerking?) seems to indicate the same action of provocative incitation/accusation as the men to the stag, and elsewhere to the bull.

Lacking in the short term an agreed-upon moment of cattle domestication at Çatalhöyük, Girard's scapegoat hypothesis helps to "sequence-date" (Flinders Petrie's term) the moment of these wall paintings in the development or de-development of sacrifice, from an earlier near-spontaneous and difficult-to-control hunting mêlée, to a commemoration that tries to re-introduce that moment of chaos through dancing around and agitating a bull. Sacrifice would not have exclusively mirrored this ongoing if uneven process of cattle domestication, as we have seen, but it could not ignore the transition of its central subject from wild aurochs to domesticated cattle.

Thus it is possible to see this moment at Çatalhöyük as the moment of transition from ritual sacrifice-as-scapegoating to ritual sacrifice–as-offering. Once the value of cattle is marked higher than their danger, then sacrifice-as-offering, as gift, dissolves the unification of the entire sacrificial community in a collective ritual, to emphasize individual practices

for smaller groups within the community: the unspotted perfect offering, the divinity to whom the sacrifice is addressed, the sacrificing priest, and the sole provider or sponsor who hopes to benefit himself or his "family" or subgroup. Further along in this development of society and religion would be the rationalization of cattle as a unit of offering, and perhaps, as Bernhard Laum proposes (Laum 1924), the emergence of money out of religious practice, not for commercial exchange but for the symbol of so many cattle for sacrifice.

The historical record (where we are lucky enough to have it) will be more complex. We must always remind ourselves that people on the ground, as opposed to theorists, will try anything, in any order, to get peace. We can well imagine for certain societies that the imagistic phase is not historically the earlier, if, for example, we imagine a society which has simply borrowed the format of its customs, low-grade rituals, its doctrinal religiosity from another culture whose rituals seem to work, or had these customs imposed on them from another. Girard's hypothesis depends on this historical record and the generalizations made by Durkheim and others about the predominance of religion in every human society available for anthropological study, and perhaps this historical record itself shows the evolutionary superiority of religion for holding a group together long enough to produce such a record.

Girard's hypothesis would suggest that, of Whitehouse's two religious modes, the imagistic is logically if not chronologically prior to the doctrinal. The sudden crisis of the whole community faced with extinction, delivered by some unforeseen miraculous event which restores order, comes before the punctual system of mini-events of rituals which seem to remember that crisis in order to prevent its recurrence, along with taboos and prohibitions that outlaw any behavior which resembles stages on the way to that crisis.

When these "low-intensity high-frequency" customs fall apart, meaning when society starts breaking up and its rules and taboos cannot contain its violence, then only a foundational rebirth in a highly imagistic, cathartic experience will return the community to order. Girard's model of the original violence is the story, the history of passing through chaos to the peace on the other side of its inevitable exhaustion of its own material, like the action of uncontrolled fire itself. One can imagine that the high "cost" of the imagistic keeps it infrequent and, as long as a crisis doesn't break out, a community could eventually organize more around doctrinal modes of religiosity. Yet doctrinal customs have the same function as imagistic ritual: to protect the community from its own violence. Taboos

channeling everyday behavior prevent the community from the rivalry which can elevate into the full-blown crisis that imagistic ritual invokes and exorcises. But when violence returns, the imagistic returns, hopefully with its priceless end, which is not at all inevitable.

The bull's size in comparison to the humans who encircle him registers the view of the community, the insider's phenomenological experience of the hunt, but it also registers the bull's qualification as the center of a sacrifice. The bull sacrifice substitutes for a human sacrifice. No human being could ever be as big an enemy of the people as this bull. The periodic plastering over and repainting of many of the murals, as well as the bucrania, emphasizes, as no permanent mural could, the ritual as itself a necessarily recurring event which displaces, transfers any residual or accumulating animosities tainting any of the community of smaller humans on to the bull. According to Ian Hodder (personal communication), this famous mural was plastered over but not repainted. (Or not yet repainted?) This is a useful reminder that ritual and renewal are tied to the historical circumstances of real communities in real time. This painting remains as the last rendition of this event as depicted.

The enlargement of the bull suggests as well the potential amalgamation of Girard's and Walter Burkert's models for the sacrificial origin of culture. Girard believes the overwhelming similarity of sacrifice across archaic cultures can be best explained by human sacrifice at its origin, a ritual repetition of the result of spontaneous violence focusing down on a single (last) victim. Animal victims were later substituted for human victims, just as certain classes of human victims with a crucial social link missing were earlier substituted for full members of the community. Burkert argues rather that this same similarity in sacrifice across archaic cultures can best be accounted for by the group solidarity necessarily evolved for the successful hunting of prey.

Is it now possible to see a convergence between Burkert and Girard? Where a dangerous prey can turn the tables on the hunters, then the animal is a more dangerous enemy than any human among the hunters: they have a common enemy, and it is his role as enemy, more than prey, which unites them. It is possible that certain communities discovered the transfer of violence on to animal enemies without having to go through a (prolonged) stage of human sacrifice.

After the delivery of Girard's lecture on Çatalhöyük at UC Riverside in 2008, Wolfgang Palaver asked Girard if now Burkert's hunting hypothesis could be seen as a parallel theory of origin. After thirty-five years Girard was open to it, and we must credit the murals for this opportunity

for convergence of these two influential theories. Animal sacrifice is still a transfer of human violence, but it doesn't require a horrific preparatory period of human sacrifice absolutely, necessarily.

Burkert himself remarked many times that Girard's *Violence and the Sacred* and his own *Homo Necans* were first published in the same year (1972). They are twins, in a way, waiting to be reconciled. Girard saw human sacrifice and Burkert saw hunting as the original, hominizing event which crystallized the subsequent development of religion, myth, and ritual as agencies of solidarity. Burkert has found it easier to persuade archaeologists and fellow classical philologists of hunting as origin than Girard has found an audience to accept human sacrifice as origin, but, as Jan Bremmer argues, human sacrifice has been consistently underestimated (Bremmer 2007).

Yet, as Roberto Calasso has suggested (Calasso 2014), we must not thoughtlessly collapse the potential differences between gathering and hunting in the phrase "hunter-gatherers." If envy and conflict over sharing can take place over any object, foraged, gathered, or hunted, Burkert would have to argue that humans have always hunted, that there was no prior period/culture of human or hominin gathering and foraging before hunting. If the current archaeological record shows that recent human species have always been hunters (killers), then Girard's hypothesis of rivalry over any object allows for a continuity with whatever sociality hominin or prehuman ancestors were capable of. But wherever gathering or sharing comes before hunting in the development of human or prehuman communities, then Girard's scene of rivalry leading to a mêlée of violence is the more likely, more comprehensive hypothesis for the similarity in origins of human community which have been speculated on by anthropologists, psychologists, and historians for the past 150 years.

By enlarging the bull, by in effect going against the dwarfing effects of domestication, the wall murals perspicaciously confirm the teasing as the process necessary to return the community to the period when the bull was enemy as much as or more than prey, and perhaps help to explain what most other commentators have noticed, that by preference creatures dangerous to humans are depicted more than prey in ritual or religious contexts at Göbekli Tepe as well as Çatalhöyük, and domesticated or harmless animals hardly at all. One could propose that leopards, the central mystery of Hodder's meditation on Çatalhöyük in *The Leopard's Tale* (Hodder 2006), were simply too powerful and crafty to be hunted, too good at turning the tables on hunters, and certainly too intransigent to ever play any part in a ritual. Aurochs would perhaps be

the next most difficult but not impossible prey in some developmental history of sacrifice.

The architecture of Çatalhöyük suggests that the community has taken a certain direction away from imagistic modes of religiosity, towards the doctrinal. There seem to be no collective spaces built into Çatalhöyük in which the whole community might easily gather and mass. The buildings rather seem to prevent gathering, except perhaps in segments, and the amount of regulation over domestic space necessary to produce such a common pattern of interior arrangement, unit after unit, suggests a doctrinal domination of it. The firing of units is usually described in the context of renovation and renewal, but surely it could also be considered as a violent delicensing, disbarring, and erasing of that unit from the community for some nonconformity. Perhaps the small cut-throughs between some houses, and the emerging recognition of relations between neighboring houses (Hodder 2010), can be seen as resistance or push-back against a purer isolation, an initial regathering of a community.

The wall paintings of teasing scenes start midway in the history of Çatalhöyük (Level V or South P). They do not appear through all levels. As they recall a time when bulls were wilder than they are at this present moment, they manage (or address) a tension which apparently emerged between pre-Çatalhöyük modes of gathering and the isolation which the Çatalhöyük perfection of agglomeration achieves, a tension between the times of collective imagistic rituals and the relative autonomy of doctrinal obedience of individual units. If the de-domestication of cattle seems necessary to the ritual which identifies the bull as the enemy of the people, what will the ultimate domestication of cattle mean for the ritual (and perhaps at least indirectly for Çatalhöyük itself, whose moment is coterminous with the delaying of cattle domestication)?

The archaic sacred is ambivalent because it coalesces the dangerous enemy who is sacrificed with the peace that follows his sacrifice. Perhaps solely because perfect repetition is impossible for humankind, ambivalence is a delicate, unstable state; certainly it is vulnerable because a community will ultimately rationalize whatever it thinks will save it, "strengthening" either the curse or the blessing of the victim. When bulls in the main can no longer be effectively portrayed as the enemy, when domestication has achieved a certain level of pacification, then the enemy, the ritual itself, will instead become an offering up of the bull (like all other pacified and domesticated goods) to a sacred being altogether exteriorized.

Some animals, such as bears and poisonous insects, will forever remain poor candidates for domestication. Nothing better characterizes the recherché quality of contemporary culture devising its version of noble savagery than its de-domestication of dogs, the greatest success story of human/animal inter-domestication, into rottweilers as dangerous to their owners as everyone else.

This is perhaps the significance of the timeliness of this wall painting. If it has been covered over but not repainted, does this mean that it is no longer needed, or that what the ritual depicts no longer works? And then, why was it needed in the first place, except to make explicit what the formerly self-sufficient bucrania (whose origin is slightly earlier) no longer could indicate self-evidently? We might say that the taunting of the bull, if necessary to the ritual, when depicted, risks giving the game away by too much thinking about the process, and indicates a problem with the ambiguity, the hidden guilt of the sacrificers, that later sacrificial practices also have to manage.

The Çatalhöyük wall paintings represent the tipping point for cattle domestication but perhaps sacrifice itself as understood by this community, as well as the transition from imagistic to doctrinal modes of religiosity. The bull as enemy is sacrifice proper, the bull made sacred (sacre-fier) because he is the enemy become benefactor when his accusers unite against him. Such sacrifices would be of the high-intensity, low-frequency, imagistic mode of religiosity in Whitehouse's terms. Yet in the longue durée of domestication, bulls, boars, stags will never be altogether safely domesticated, and therefore could always be accused. They remain *in potentia* sufficiently dangerous to support such later rituals as Minoan bull-jumping and even modern bull-fighting, but perhaps teasing may have proved to be a too visible and culpable way of accusing, ultimately discrediting the process, downgrading it to the sport and entertainment of bear-baiting and bull-fighting.

A sacrifice better suited to innocent bulls would "offer" the bull to a more credible exteriorized being responsible for blessings and curses. The domesticated bull would then be something of our own we "give up" (as we moderns customarily think of sacrifice) to a god, and comes to resemble other perfect unspotted offerings in a doctrinal mode.

The wall paintings which depict the bull as enemy of the people, as scapegoat, whose power is then ceremoniously ingested in a feast, commemorate the recovery and amalgamation of pre-Çatalhöyük modes of (imagistic) religiosity into a community mostly now committed to the doctrinal. When the pacified bull can no longer be imagined as an enemy, did it then become instead a ritual offering, a gift, perhaps to the gods but

perhaps more to each other? At about this time, Çatalhöyük begins its eventual deglomeration, separating first in two, then dispersing. Would a ritual of gift be too mild to be effectively polarizing when things go wrong? Was Çatalhöyük unable to recover a restorative high-intensity ritual which would hold the whole community together? "The social focus on wild bulls and ancestors worked well for a long time. It allowed resilience and flexibility in a society based on a diversity of resources. But around 6500 BC, as society became more dependent on the more intensive herding of sheep and domestic cattle, the older system broke down" (Hodder 2014).

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8

The Ordeal of the Town

Rites and Symbols at Çatalhöyük

Benoît Chantre

For anyone who takes an interest today in the religion and art of Çatalhöyük, the paintings uncovered by James Mellaart in the 1960s are what first catch the eye.[1] In these paintings, one sees a crowd of tiny hunters, with or without beards, wearing leopard-skin loincloths, leaping and dancing around a gigantic bull, stag, bear, or wild boar. Analyzing these images in a lecture at Riverside, California in 2008, René Girard seemed to privilege the stag hunt. Describing two successive images, he sees in the collective violence striking the animal the equivalent of a lynching:

> The animal suddenly deprived of its feet is about to collapse, and will never rise again. When this happens, the mob will probably rush forward, and quickly finish off the stag. The animal will be lynched with total impunity.

Such an analysis, if it stems from an error of interpretation of the image, since what is mistaken for an amputation comes from a deterioration of the painting, nonetheless reveals a clear intention: to read a hunting scene through the lens of lynching. Even though ethnography reports few examples of wild animal sacrifice, it is thus not as a hunt but as a sacrifice that Girard describes this scene. It is thus natural that he should humanize the sacrificed animal. The stag has been put in the place of a victim who, forgotten, became through this very forgetting the founder of a new human order.

One of the aims of this chapter will be to ask under what conditions a sacrificial interpretation of both animal and human relics and the painted

[1] This chapter was translated from the original French by Trevor Cribben Merrill.

images found at the Çatalhöyük site is possible. It is this anthropology of origins that I would like to test by means of a concrete case – that of one of the first large Neolithic villages known to date. If the Girardian model proves capable of shedding light on the earliest stages of sedentism, we will be able to suggest that the establishment of sacrificial institutions and the founding of the first large villages at the end of the Epipalaeolithic went hand in hand.

Animal sacrifice is for Girard the repetition of a primordial lynching. It imitates an originary scene that happened not just one time, contrary to what Freud first assumed, but every time that a society descended into crisis and founded a new order. The bull sacrifice confirms what the stag sacrifice first enabled Girard to see: the metamorphosis of a threatening animal into a protective divinity. But it is the interest shown in the cervid that makes it possible to point out the humanization and then the divinization of the animal; in other words, to relate it back to an emissary victim. And Girard shows, rightly or wrongly, that the hunters are involved not so much in exciting the animal as in cutting its ankles, so that once it has been "finished off" they will be able to cut off its antlers and affix this trophy to their wall. The interpretation of this painting constituted in and of itself the horizon of our research. I would like to contribute to the enrichment of the interpretation offered by Girard, by bringing it into contact with, on the one hand, research conducted by Ian Hodder's team, with whom we've been working since 2013, and, on the other, with an anthropology developed by Philippe Descola and dedicated specifically to images. I will advance the hypothesis that the shift, over the course of Çatalhöyük's 1,100 years, from the first domestic spaces *haunted by the dead* (animal and human remains hidden in the floors or walls) to houses *inhabited by images* and emptied of all relics, inasmuch as it bears witness to a fundamental transformation in living conditions, can also be seen as archeological evidence of the efficiency of sacrifice and sacrificial prohibitions.

The Stag and the Bull

Let us acknowledge right away that stag antlers are not very visible on the walls of Çatalhöyük. Ian Hodder's book *The Leopard's Tale* (Hodder 2006), on which Girard offered commentary in 2008, shows that the bull trophies are what was highlighted. The stag horns, like the defenses of the wild boar, were sometimes hidden in the walls or in the floors. It was thus the remains of the stag that accompanied those of the bull, and

not the other way around. The bull trophies, which are very visible in each dwelling, dominated those of other wild animals which, plastered and unplastered, visible and invisible, became precious relics, reflecting the glow of the central event. It is possible that Girard privileges the stag to some degree out of fidelity to the medieval and Renaissance heritage in which the animal is classically associated with Christ. One can thus understand why the cervid's successive falls are almost described by Girard as stations of the cross. But the sacrifice of the bull is interpreted in turn in the same way. This animal, then, is also likened to an emissary victim, a first human victim repeated or imitated, according to Girardian theory, by "ritual victims." The sacrifice of the latter consists in avoiding lynching, insofar as this collective and random solution to violence is, as such, a dangerous outcome, or in any case uncontrolled. The goal of sacrificial ritual is to regulate group violence, to technically and symbolically master that violence.

Lewis-Williams's (2004) and Lee Clare's (Chapter 5 this volume) recent studies, interpreting images of this type, suggest that the animal was perhaps already dead or dying; thus the erect penis and protruding tongue, visible in the Neolithic paintings (see Chapter 3 this volume for a contrary interpretation of the erect penis). These rituals are commonly analyzed today as sacrifices. For the men surrounding these enormous beasts are dancers just as much as they are hunters, and the animals around which they are dancing are "teased and baited," as Hodder (2006) writes. The animal is the object of a unanimous and joyous polarization, but it is not crippled with arrows. It is possible or even probable that what we are witnessing here is a phenomenon of "de-domestication" (see Johnsen, Chapter 7 this volume): the hunter-dancers of Çatalhöyük would then be replaying a hunting scene and "ensavaging" peaceful if not fully domesticated animals during sacred festivals.

These paintings appear in the later levels of the village, at a time when domesticated cattle had already been introduced. The discovery by Klaus Schmidt's team at the Göbekli Tepe site, two thousand years older than Çatalhöyük, of a bull etched on a stone and presenting the same characteristics as the Çatalhöyük bull, suggests how ancient is this ritual, which must have corresponded to exceptional periods of the year. It is conceivable that domestic animal sacrifices, for their part, were more frequent and less intense. They would not have involved the whole group, but certain neighborhoods or houses in the village. The group's internal violence would have regulated itself between these daily rituals and the exceptional ones. Without necessarily seeing here what Philippe Descola

calls the "distorting lenses of the Judeo-Christian tradition" (Descola 2008), let us recall that Girard ascribes to these wild animals – which are sacrificed at key moments – a *symbolic* function: he suggests that they unveil and designate, by their slow agony in the midst of the crowd of hunters, the originary phenomenon of lynching of human victims. Note that the author of *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World* formulated an analysis fairly close to this one as early as 1978, at a time when he was unaware of the archeological digs at Çatalhöyük:

> To understand the impulse that was able to send men in pursuit of the biggest and most formidable animals, so that the type of organization that prehistoric hunts necessitated could be created, it is necessary and sufficient to acknowledge that the hunt, too, is first and foremost a sacrificial activity. *The quarry is perceived as a replacement of the originary, monstrous, and sacred victim. It is in pursuit of a reconciling victim that men go in the hunt*. The ritualistic character of the hunt makes immediately conceivable an activity involving complex techniques and requiring the coordination of numerous individuals.
>
> Even in our own time the religious nature of the hunt, the ritual assignment of roles, and the sacrificial character of the victim all suggest this origin. And the prehistoric evidence that we possess suggests it too, from the great Magdalenian paintings to the geometric arrangements of bones, of animal and human skulls, that are found in certain places. The myths of the hunt also testify to this ritual origin: *all the narratives or roles of prey and hunter can be exchanged*, but everything always pivots on a collective murder. The common denominator is not in the techniques or the species hunted but in the collective murder, attributed to men or to animals, from which those techniques emerge.
>
> (Girard 1978, 81; translations and emphasis added by the present author)

The Girardian insight thus makes of the "lynching of the stag" at Çatalhöyük the symbol-type of the innocence of victims, who were first human beings before being replaced by other human or animal victims. Sacrifices or hunting rituals – which without necessarily implying the existence of gods nonetheless are "sacrificial activities" in their cathartic function – had as their effect, according to Girard, the vaccination of society against its own violence. A "minor catharsis" derived from a "major catharsis" (Girard 1972), the *sacrificial* victim derived its propitiatory effectiveness from being "grafted" on the *emissary* victim, from replaying its agony, but in a meticulously constructed framework. Girard thus posits that one and the same mechanism is at the origin of the exteriorization of the group's violence in the form of the sacred, and at the origin of human institutions, those mediations that maintained transcendent violence at the right distance from the group and which ended

up giving to violence the face of the gods. It is clear, from this point of view, that sedentism must have provided the framework and thus greatly contributed to the emergence of the institution of sacrifice in a more general sense. The one who immolated this ritual victim was miming the original scene at lower cost. Since the first victim had restored order after embodying disorder, it became a founding divinity. Human beings had to domesticate this first divinity not yet clearly identified by offering him other substitute victims, so that this divinity of violence did not come back to haunt the group. It is in the indefinitely repeated usage of this first symbol, of this first substitution (the symbol of the victim immolated in the place of another), that certain human societies – call them sacrificial societies – little by little conquered their independence, and were able to think of themselves as separate from their environment.

There are not any crowds in the deserts and the forests. There are crowds, however, in the big farming villages and in their vicinity. There can be no doubt that the little groups of Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers were familiar with the dangers of groups. It is completely probable that they also knew the phenomenon of lynchings, perhaps even the beginnings of their ritualization. Ten years ago, Professor Vincenzo Formicola, of the Department of Biology at the University of Pisa, carried out research on funerary sites of the Upper Palaeolithic (from 30,000 to 10,000 BC), which may attest to sacrificial practices (Formicola 2007). In these tombs are found skeletons of dwarfs or handicapped infants. These practices cannot fail to evoke the "bad deaths" described by the archaeologists working at Çatalhöyük, with regard to skeletons discovered outside houses or under the "foundation stones" of certain houses (for a full discussion of these examples, see Knüsel et al. Chapter 4 this volume). A negative proof of this reality of the founding murder, this time unritualized by sacrifice, is also provided by the fact, so often observed in ethnology, of tribes splitting themselves up once they attain a certain size. This could be seen as the group's response to the fundamental risk of social disorder implied by the scapegoat mechanism, since the death of an individual killed by chance could lead to a cycle of vengeance. There was probably, in the prehistory of sedentism, an instinctive consciousness of the danger of living close together. If, as many archaeologists are in agreement in thinking today, the reasons that led to significant social agglomerations were not economic but religious, it is reasonable to advance the idea that humanity became sedentary when it proved ready to assume the risk of doing so – in Girardian terms, when it figured out how to master its violence by substituting ritual victims for the victims of lynchings. Sedentism assumes

an increased mastery of symbols, and of the matrix of all symbols that is the surrogate victim. This is the reason why the Çatalhöyük bull is not the bull of Lascaux: it appears in the middle of a hunting and dancing crowd, it is the victim of a festive, meticulously regulated lynching. Hence the symbolic importance of the painting when it depicts the sacrifice: it is the origins of their society that painters reflect in the portrayal of these sacrifices. It can thus be concluded that the pacifying virtue of this festive ritual must confer on paintings of this kind a bit of the talismanic value of trophies from the "classical" era of Çatalhöyük.

The first sedentary human groupings, with all the tensions that they must have entailed, emerged twelve thousand years ago, in the Middle East. A series of pre-urban experiments took place in succession over a very long period and an increasingly extended space, making possible the invention of agriculture and of animal breeding, that is to say the capacity of human beings to produce their own resources, to create for themselves stores of food, and finally to master time and space (Cauvin 1994). Without too much risk, we can thus apply Girard's Durkheimian model to the Neolithic revolution. But does this social model work in the period before sedentism? Can the skeletons of bears covered with their skin, as seen in certain Palaeolithic caves in the south of France, be interpreted as the remains of sacrifices (see Chapter 4 this volume for discussion of Palaeolithic evidence)? Girard might respond too quickly in the affirmative. We can, however, assume that the institution of sacrifice was then still in its infancy, and that it is the phenomenon of sedentism that accelerated its formation; but one could also assert the opposite and ask whether it was not the first sacrificial practices that were the source of large-scale human groupings. The current conclusions pertaining to the Göbekli Tepe site, where all economic activity seems to be absorbed by sacrificial practices in veritable temples, point in this direction. We would then be dealing with a form of circular causality. A study of the relics and images in the Çatalhöyük site could make it possible to buttress this hypothesis. In other words, even if the emergence of transcendence was the fruit of a very long maturation, it is when they fixed themselves durably in a place that human beings must have needed gods. The modalities of the choice of this site and the sacrificial conditions of these epiphanies still have to be determined.

A "Symbolic Revolution"

One sees that these first remarks lead us to aim less at uncovering the origin of humankind than at that of cities, and concretely of the large

farming village of Çatalhöyük. Without in the least contradicting the theory proposed by Girard, the contribution of the work of Philippe Descola (2005) to this first scenario could prove to be very fertile, because the "combination" that he sets up seeks to shed light on images, which are often the only traces that remain of vanished rituals. I will put forward the hypothesis that the evolution of decorative art, over the eleven centuries of the village's existence, could provide archaeological evidence of the structuring role of religious practices in the phenomenon of sedentism. From this vantage point Philippe Descola's anthropology, which has inspired much recent archaeological work (Boric 2014; Watts 2014), could offer invaluable assistance. On condition that the four "world-compositions" that he endeavors to describe (animism, totemism, analogism, naturalism) are seen from a diachronic rather than synchronic perspective, his anthropology could enable us to bolster the hypothesis that sacrificial practices were crucial in choosing a durable site, but also in a new relationship to the surrounding world.

Descola's approach starts from a study conducted among the Achuar Indians of the Upper Amazon, whose relationship to the world – prior to the later dichotomy between "nature" and "culture" – Descola describes in convincing fashion. His point of departure is the animism of the Achuar, which he thinks constitutes an originary relationship to the natural environment, or at least the "composition of worlds" that is as far as possible from that implied by the existence of a state. Animism participates in an exchange between "humans" and "non-humans," in a first composition of two worlds that are inextricably intertwined. This identification has nothing to do with the relations of humans to animals that Girard employs when he interprets the hunt as a lynching and opts for the idea of wild animal sacrifices. When Girard at once humanizes and divinizes the animal, seeing through it the first human victims of crowds, this is less an identification (with the animal) than a symbolization (of the human by the animal): Girard signifies that the animals – sacrificed more than they are hunted, substitutes of victims that were originally human – derive their protective character from the originary scene that the sacrifice of which they are the object mimes. The identification with animals practiced by the groups of hunter-gatherers is completely different: Descola shows that they often share with "non-humans" the same "interiority" while maintaining a different "physicality."

That is why Descola refuses to speak of sacrifice with respect to ritual killings practiced in animist collectives (Descola 2005). One could object that these rituals don't necessarily need gods to be "sacrificial" (or

"pre-sacrificial"), since the function of sacrifice, according to Girard, is primarily to keep the group's violence at a distance. Thus understood, sacrifice could very well have been practiced by hunter-gatherer societies. But it is true, on the other hand, that the hunt is not yet a spectacle for the little groups of nomadic hunters; it assumes a vital and immediate negotiation with animals. Speaking of lynching and assuming a sacrifice of the stag, Girard socializes the animal, which implies a completely different relationship with nature: the relationship proper to sedentary societies, where the animal has become a substitute for human beings. The ritual reveals what it imitates. It is more or less conscious of its social efficiency – Girard calls this "misrecognition." But the ritual could only have become part of a religion, which is to say involving the existence of divinities this time clearly identified, in the time period when domestication had become predominant. True, we know less about the sacrifice of domestic animals at Çatalhöyük, although domestic sheep and goat were involved in feasting as well as in domestic consumption. The paintings uncovered by James Mellaart, on the other hand, depict wild animal sacrifices. We can advance the hypothesis that the sacrifices of domestic animals were more frequent and less impressive. This would explain, on the other hand, the important place occupied by aurochs trophies in the houses.

This, of course, does not prevent other "world-compositions" from persisting synchronically at the very moment of sedentism, in this instance an animism assuming a quite different relationship to the environment. Nor does it prevent us from resituating this animism in a diachronic perspective: it would then define a composition of human and non-human beings, which the institution of sacrifice would have brought to a historical close, separating on the one hand the domain of the gods, and on the other that of human beings, but also ultimately separating the human and non-human spheres. This would be the reason why this "animist" fusion of human and non-human is connoted negatively by religious rituals (which differ from other practices and other relationships to the surrounding world) and why it even appears as a dangerous "undifferentiation," to use the Girard's key term in *Violence and the Sacred* (Girard 1972). Which is also why Descola, for his part, although he sees Girardian anthropology as truly pertinent insofar as it makes it possible to account for the origin of sacrificial practices (discussion with the author in November 2014), refuses to use the term sacrifice for killing practices that correspond to other types of relationships to the world than those created by the existence of the gods. The killings practiced by certain animist "collectives"

would from this vantage point have no "sacred" dimension whatsoever. The two visions are in strong disagreement on this point, the one calling "undifferentiation" what could be called "composition," and the other calling "putting to death" what is, in spite of what the entire structuralist tradition maintains, a sacrifice. It is nonetheless the case – and this is my thesis – that the confrontation of these two anthropological models is relevant for the example we are concerned with: the shift from hunter-gatherers to farmer-herders, characterized – as Jacques Cauvin (1994) suggested – by a "symbolic revolution."

It is when the basic food supply was assured, around 6500 BC, and when domestic animals (sheep and goats at Çatalhöyük) provided a store of meat sufficient for the group's survival, that the sacrifice of wild animals could have acquired a "memorial" value, in other words a ritual meaning. This bygone period of the village's history, replayed at key moments of the year, must have produced powerful cathartic effects. The ritual became a festival that aided in governing relations among the inhabitants at an extremely tense period of their history: its function had become clearly social. The ritual dances of the hunters, to which the Çatalhöyük paintings bear witness, probably played with the effect of dispersal and regrouping that Girard describes in numerous rituals. This back-and-forth between simulated discontinuities and restored continuities mimes what he calls the "sacrificial crisis," the effervescence of a group on the verge of explosion, and the restoration of the unity of that group by lynching. Descola, for his part, would give the name "analogic" to this subtle and highly regulated play of fragmentation and recomposition. Sacrifice, because it plays with fire by miming the disaggregation of the group, weaves back together or revives a whole network of correspondences between human beings, between humans and animals, and between humans and the world.

It is in this sense that Girard can legitimately suggest that the stag or the bull symbolizes the emissary victim. The killing of these animals, which has become a spectacle or a painted motif, constitutes progress in the awareness that human beings have of themselves and of their world. It begins to make a hidden structure appear: the constitutive reality of the scapegoat mechanism, the phenomenon of all against one which, transforming fragmentation into unity or violence into the sacred, was a driving force in hominization, and more precisely here of urbanization. It is thus Çatalhöyük's origins that the artist who painted the stag and the bull was, unbeknown to him, illuminating. He makes visible – without being conscious of doing so, so awesome and terrifying is the image – the

driving force of pre-urban social life. Because domestication and the sacrifices that are linked to it enabled the wild animal hunt to become a privileged practice and spectacle, the Neolithic would then testify to a deeper understanding of the origin. But this awareness also constitutes a danger, the danger inherent to sedentism. What hunter-gatherers could not (or perhaps did not want to) ritualize, farmer-herders gave themselves the means of doing nine thousand years ago. This surplus of awareness constituted the precondition but also the risk of their later inventions.

Armed with the idea that the domestication of plants and animals by sedentary individuals also assumes the domestication of the gods, or that sedentism corresponds to greater symbolic complexity, we can then defend the idea that the relics-become-images, or the images that come out of the walls at Çatalhöyük, reveal the emergence of transcendence. The evolution of decorative art would be a sort of symptom. The emergence of a religious consciousness, inasmuch as it would signify a more lively intelligence of human relationships, of their risks and promise, would also attest to the emergence of a feeling of individuality.

But how could this evolution have occurred, and occurred over the course of eleven centuries? A first indication comes from Hodder's (2006) *The Leopard's Tale*: it concerns the presence–absence of the leopard at Çatalhöyük. Relativizing his initial plot somewhat, Hodder wonders today if the feline, sculpted depictions of which exist only in certain houses (in the form of symmetrical bas-reliefs, head against head), was not the totem of certain subgroups of the farming village. The leopard is in fact the predator that most resembles the individuals who are beginning to live together. It is the wild animal that best embodies the qualities of certain hunters who are in the process of becoming sacrificers. These hunters are thus part of the same category as the animal – which would explain their leopard-skin loincloths. Sharing with it, to use Descola's terminology, the "same interiority," but this time also the "same physicality," these hunters no longer form an animistic world, but one that could be qualified as "totemic." To hunt the leopard is first of all to do away with a predator; it is then to master – that is, to find a first outlet for – the violence inherent to social groups; it is, finally and above all, to share one's being with the being of the animal, and to become a predator in turn. And why not "predator in chief", at the time of sedentism, in which the hunters-dancers clothe themselves ritually in its attire and at which the totem of this animal designates a specialized category? According to this hypothesis, at the moment of sedentism, Çatalhöyük's inhabitants may have maintained the vestiges of an ancient totemic identification which

was then appropriated by some hunters, and which some dancers would have periodically assumed at the time of sacrifices. This would explain why excavations have not brought leopard bones to light: the animal was obviously taboo.

The leopard hunt could then be interpreted as a condition of possibility of life together at a given site (which may have a concrete link with this animal and the qualities that the inhabitants share with it), and as a precondition of the wild animal sacrifices that would have consecrated, at regular intervals, the community's presence on the site. In other words, the sacrifices would have become possible only once the animal's spirit and agility were acquired. The sacred hunt of the leopard would have made possible the sacrifice of the deer or aurochs. This would be why, when inhabitants recapitulated the village's history by organizing at certain intervals the great rituals that are found in the paintings, they would have been clad in totemic attributes. These paintings would in turn summarize the village's history, forming the trace of a first mythology, as Ian Hodder suggested in a discussion on the site in 2013. After the "animistic" stage of the hunter-gatherers (same interiority and a different physicality), there would then follow, in the choice of a site and the beginnings of communal life, what one might, following Descola, call a "totemic" transformation – a composition that assumes, between "humans" and "non-humans," the same interiority and the same physicality.

Without having to establish a necessary link between what Descola calls "totemism" and what we observe to be a phenomenon of sedentism, it is completely possible for us to note totemic elements in this identification with the predator, but perhaps also in the choice of the site that this predator shares with human beings. Indeed, according to Descola, totemism assumes "a moral and physical continuity within a group of humans and non-humans"(Descola 2014, 213). In Australia, he notes,

> the nexus of qualities characterizing the totemic class is said to have emerged from a primordial prototype, the Dream Being. Ethological narratives recount that, at the creation of the world, in the "time of the Dream", hybrid beings emerged from the ground *at precise locations*, experienced many adventures in the course of their peregrinations on the surface of the earth, then plunged into the entrails of the earth; the actions that they performed fashioned the physical environment, either because they transformed themselves into an element of the terrain, or because the trace of their presence remained in the landscape, such that the characteristic traits of the milieu … bear witness up until the present of these journeys. Before disappearing, these prodigious beings left behind them the seeds of individuation, the "soul-children", who have since incorporated themselves

into the humans and non-humans that compose each totemic class that came from the Dream Being and that bear its name.

(Descola 2011, 127; translations and emphasis added by the present author)

The members of this totemic clan, whose animal-type fashioned the environment, often possess a "heritage constituted by rights over localities and territories, through songs, dances, and ritual objects, and, of course, through images.", whence come works of art in which "there figure at once an organizing narrative of the Dream time, the genesis of an environment, a map sketching out topographical traits and a sort of coat of arms, the entirety attesting to a profound tie between a filiation group, a site and an ontological genesis" (Descola 2011, 128). All of these characteristics, which could strengthen the identification of the farming village with the leopard, are troubling indications of a possible totemic narrative of origins at Çatalhöyük.

But the leopard, clearly, is not yet divinized, and hunting it was likely not as festive as the stag or bull sacrifice, no doubt because this animal is too close to human beings and perhaps also because it can symbolize only their violence. From this point of view the bas-reliefs of the oldest houses, where there are often two leopards in a symmetrical position, touching heads or forepaws, are striking. This position is interpreted by Hodder either as a duel between two males, or as a "social emphasis on balance and duality" (Hodder 2006, 91). These symmetrical figures would then connote an ever-possible loss of differentiation between individuals themselves. The debate between Walter Burkert (Burkert 1972) and Girard (Hamerton-Kelly 1987), over whether sacrifice precedes the hunt or the reverse, could be tentatively resolved here: the sacred leopard hunt undoubtedly came before the sacrifices of wild animals, but it is these sacrifices, in their social and festive dimension, that made possible at once sedentism and the emergence of religion. This sacrificial foundation of Neolithic villages could quite easily have presided over the rules and symbolic codifications of the hunting rituals which, as Girard suggested in 1978, are fully sacrificial. We might be in possession of archaeological evidence that sacrifice is the cement of sedentary societies. The lynchings of human beings and the huntings of leopards were "euphemized," transformed into initiatory rituals and sacrifices. Published in the same year – 1972 – Burkert's *Homo Necans* and Girard's *Violence and the Sacred* each offer one of the missing pieces of the puzzle, making it possible to formulate a hypothesis about the origins of sedentism.

The sacred privilege, if it does not quite belong to the leopard, would belong, on the other hand, to the stag, the wild boar, and above all the bull, whose wild violence is metamorphosed into protection. It could be said, in other words, that the leopard hunt is not yet a sacrifice: suggesting vestiges of totemic identification with this predator (Descola's perspective), it also resembles a lynching, since human beings, or some human beings, identify with this animal (Girard's perspective). Dangerous in itself, the leopard hunt must also have been dangerous in its proximity to the scapegoat mechanism. Such an interpretation would confirm Hodder's analysis in *The Leopard's Tale* (2006), which suggests that the grave where the only relic of the predator was found was a "foundation burial." This woman interred with the claw as a pendant, holding in her arms – in contact with her own head – a skull many times repainted and replastered, points us toward a sacrificial interpretation of funerary practices.

Studying certain human skulls at the Çatalhöyük site, Christopher Knüsel has revealed that they belonged to individuals who survived their wounds before being buried in the houses (see Chapter 4 this volume). They could thus have been victims of violent initiation rituals or have been "punished" for having threatened the social order. We can conclude that the fact of having emerged alive from these rituals gave to their bones the same talismanic value as that conferred upon the remains of animals that had been sacrificed and become protectors. If this head repainted again and again had the same characteristics (which remains to be demonstrated), the woman would be holding a divinized skull in her hands, perhaps the skull of an ancestor, which one can imagine was replastered and repainted with each new burial, each new house foundation, inscribing the latter in a lineage.

Sacrificing a stag or a bull in a ritual productive of relics and images, and keeping the skulls of heroic individuals in certain tombs, would amount to showing that one has managed to domesticate one's violence. In this sense religion and parietal art constituted an increasingly profound, and increasingly interiorized, response to the trauma of sedentism. The hunting or sacrificial relics, the bas-reliefs, and the images could then be seen as signs of the fundamental transformation at Çatalhöyük, concerning the transition from the first totemic identifications to the institution of sacrifice properly speaking. After their identification with the leopard, the people of Çatalhöyük, sacrificing the bull, the stag, or the wild boar, would have moved on to another stage that could be qualified as "analogic," as I already suggested with respect to the

fragmentation–recomposition effect proper to ritual. This third type of world-composition assumes between the two terms of the relation a different interiority *and* a different physicality. According to Descola, the analogic regime is characterized by

> a *general fragmentation* of interiorities and physical characteristics, *a decomposition*, *a distribution and a recomposition* of these multiple entities into meaningful groups organized by systems of correspondences. *For a world that would be a pure aggregate of singularities is at once inconceivable and unlivable*. Thus it must be that among these disparate elements analogies can be drawn that will structure the singularities by weaving them into chains of symbolic correspondences.
>
> (Descola 2014, 214; emphasis added)

Of course one cannot help thinking here of what Girard describes under the name "sacrificial crisis": decomposition and recomposition of the group at the expense of a victim; a double movement that is then repeated in ritual practices. This third "world-composition," Descola specifies, implies a world that is entirely fragmented, a plethora of human and separate non-human entities, between which are made possible a whole series of correspondences and analogies, numerous signifying chains conferring order on individual and collective destinies. This constant tension between fragmentation and analogic recomposition corresponds nicely to the ordeal of sedentism as represented by the excavations at Çatalhöyük. The traces left by sacrifices – hidden relics, exposed trophies, or figures painted on the walls – would become a striking illustration of this. Indeed, the bull and the stag are radically different from the inhabitants who become hunter-dancers during the festival period: they are the Others of the community. And yet an essential relationship is born between these physically *and* spiritually heterogeneous beings. The institution of sacrifice thus corresponds perfectly to what Descola calls an analogic world-composition.

It happens that this dynamic aspect of broken and reconstituted relationships fits very well with Çatalhöyük society, whose static structure displays this fragmentation and this regrouping associated with the symbolic. Thus the houses, as Hodder's work has revealed, were not properly speaking family residences, since the children were at times lodged elsewhere than their birthplace (Pilloud and Larsen 2011). The remains of the buried dead also came from other dwellings: the bones were the remains not of private ancestors, but of ancestors common to the great family of the village, whose cohesiveness was made possible by restrictive rituals and prohibitions. In short, in the village everything was ready for

a "symbolic revolution" (Cauvin) or an "analogic world-composition" (Descola). Taking a much more pragmatic approach, Girard, for his part, would see in these dead "from away" a means of avoiding the recurrent conflicts associated with burials. Indeed, there are abundant ethnographic accounts of interments performed not by those close to the deceased but by others, that is to say by members of another family or tribe. Here the taboo bearing on the cadaver is the same as the one bearing on totemic food, which is never consumable but always exchangeable. The displaced or exchanged bones may then have become the symbols of a certain type of sociality. These symbols must have been given a deeper meaning and interiorized over the course of the village's history, until the moment at which the paintings replaced the relics in the houses. Thus it would have been the mastery of sacrifice and the scrupulous respect of prohibitions that made this evolution possible.

That is why, from a Girardian perspective, the sacralized animal always refers back to a first human victim, in the signifying and structuring repetition constituted by the ritual. But this symbolic construction is not yet possible at the "totemic" stage, because at this stage the animal is not different from the human, who shares the same essence with the animal. Alike because they belong to the same class, human and animal do not leave enough play between them for symbolization. This will be the case, on the other hand, in the analogic regime proper to sedentism. This symbolic exploration, liberating humans from a certain type of identification with the animal and opening them to other correspondences, must have contributed to the emergence of a feeling of individuality, a self-consciousness supported by the presence of others. This is one way of interpreting the collective joy of the hunter-dancers moving around the aurochs, stags, and wild boars: killing the symbolic animal while dressed in the attributes of the totem animal became the basis for a new type of sociality. From this point of view, the "analogic" examples given by Descola wherein certain animals are, as in Mexico, the doubles of certain human beings, are significant: physically and spiritually discontinuous, having no relationship between them, the human person and his or her animal double nonetheless share a "community of destiny" because "anything that poses a threat to the integrity of the one simultaneously affects the other" (Descola 2014, 215). It suffices to move from the human person to the group as a whole to come back to an insight dear to Girard: the aurochs must have been the community's "monstrous double." By putting to death its own substitute, the group played out the drama of its own death and resurrection to cathartic effect.

A study of the killing of wild animals at the dawn of the Neolithic would thus make it possible to grasp the transition from one world-composition to another, hence the value of bringing together Girard's and Descola's respective models. It can be assumed, indeed, that some inhabitants of Çatalhöyük "became leopards again" by taking on an eminent role in the festivals. But as an animal at once wild and familiar – somewhere between lion and cat, in a certain sense – this predator must also have resembled the human victims of lynchings. This is why it appeared as the perfect sketch of the surrogate victim, hunted in place of the emissary victim. Unable to fully sacralize its prey, the leopard hunt must have secured the decisive transition toward the institution of sacrifice. In the representations of the feline on the walls, head to head and forepaws against forepaws, one could even see the beginning of an analogic "connection," a precursor to the much more involved connection between the woman's skull in contact with the ancestral skull in the tomb.

Such an interpretation, which defends a possible shift from the totemic animal to the sacrificial animal, thus goes against Lévi-Strauss, who critiqued the "history of religions" for proposing that totemic practices could sometimes have entailed putting to death the taboo animal and were therefore at the origin of sacrifice. Let us recall that in *Totemism* and *The Savage Mind*, Lévi-Strauss (1962a, 1962b) distinguished between totemism, which maintains a discontinuity between animals for purposes of classification, and sacrifice, which maintains a continuity between animals, which this time are indefinitely substitutable. According to him, totemism aimed at maintaining the difference between non-substitutable elements; it maintained a "differential gap" that sacrifice, on the contrary, caused to disappear, since an animal could be substituted for a human being, a plant for an animal, and so forth. Perhaps we have here, at Çatalhöyük, the proof that totemic and sacrificial institutions were not so foreign to each other.

But whatever the outcome of these debates from another age, I am putting forth the idea that the leopard hunt could have been the condition of possibility for aurochs and stag sacrifices. Hence the fundamental and terrible status of this predator, a clandestine intermediary ("passeur") between the profane and the sacred, daily life and holidays, the group's self-destruction and its resurrection, but also between two world-compositions, totemism and analogism. Miming an ever-possible destruction or a fragmentation of their community, the men-leopards also mime the avoidance of this catastrophe by designating a "monstrous double." They then destroy this animal after having de-domesticated

and ensavaged it, restoring group unity around it. It is very interesting from this point of view to note that Hodder interprets certain details of the animal-scene paintings, in which the dancers seem to throw aside their loincloths, as a ritual abandonment of these borrowed skins. This moment of the dance may correspond not only to the shedding of totemic identity, but also to the consecration of the new community, which is now symbolized by the stag and the wild boar, but above all by the aurochs. This in turn explains the talismanic power of this trophy in the houses, where it has become the symbol of the collectivity protecting individuals who have been at once equalized and revealed to themselves by the festival in which they have participated. What Hodder calls the "aggressive egalitarianism" of Çatalhöyük is given its full expression in the ritual: the first sedentaries resolved the risks of a hierarchical society, pregnant with possible revolts, in an equality of all before the Beast.

The hypothesis can thus be ventured that the paintings discovered by James Mellaart unwittingly reveal this victimary phenomenon, since the size of the prey (aurochs, stag, and wild boar), which is enormous compared with the tiny hunter-dancers, could testify to the divinization of the animals. Sacrifice, even if one does not abandon the hypothesis that it was developed over a very long period, is, however, more compatible with an "analogic" identification with the world, I have argued, than with an "animist" or "totemic" identification, to use Descola's terms. The animal is different from us, but we can make it into a substitute, sacrifice it instead of a member of our community – even more precisely, in place of the scapegoat already substituted for the community. The death of the animal will then be the equivalent of that first victim; it will recall the first "miracle" that inaugurated the series. Descola would grant that there is an analogy here between the sacrificer and the aurochs, since the trophies of this wild animal prove to be fundamental in Çatalhöyük society. But he would not necessarily emphasize the sacred dimension of this protective animal, which is a veritable double of the community as a whole. Thus the necessity of bringing Girard into the debate. This veneration of the sacralized animal may testify to the very earliest stages of a human history that by means of sacrifices and the birth of divinities is separating itself from the surrounding world. It may also testify to a growing mastery over this world, in the sense of production. The model of Çatalhöyük would finally have been found.

The painting revealed by Mellaart in house FVI (often termed the Hunting Shrine), in the upper layers of the site and in a house larger than

its predecessors, appears as an emblem of this civilization in the process of being born – almost as a propaganda image some archeologists suggest (Whitehouse and Hodder 2010), and in any case the mirror of a civilization where, after the plastering and unplastering of animal and human relics, very different relationships to the world are being cemented. It is the time when the new owners leave the village to graze their herds, but also to find women and, for these foreign companions, the material for new ornaments. It is also the moment when the Neolithic model, which is eminently transmissible (unlike the animistic model, for example, which deals a new hand to each generation without any transmission or ancestrality), will be exported and conquer the west of Anatolia, and then the whole of Europe.

We find here outlined the fourth and final ontology provided by Descola, even if it is only applicable to the modern period: "naturalism" (which assumes that "humans" and "non-humans" have the same physicality but a different interiority). The naturalist regime assumes a "moral discontinuity between humans and non-humans and [a] physical continuity among all beings" (Descola 2014, 213). In this sense it constitutes the exact opposite of animism. An article by André-George Haudricourt (Haudricourt 1962) put Descola on the scent by comparing two types of relationships to domestic animals: the shepherd's relationship in the West, "exercising a direct and permanent action on the animals," and that of the buffalo keeper in Asia, protected by the buffalos at the first threatening sign from a predator (Haudricourt 1962, quoted in Descola 2014, 202). Naturalism thus corresponds to a bygone separation between nature and culture, and implies the domination of the former by the latter. The "culture" designated by its opposition to "nature" is itself pluralized in numerous cultures divided up according to a single and homogeneous basic outline. This is the stage of resources that are produced, of stocked food, and of an unprecedented mastery of time and space – in short, the "world-composition" that triumphs in the modern period, and this increasingly to the exclusion of other "possible worlds." It would then be because it marks a rupture with respect to the first (animist) ontology, because it crystallizes the following two (totemic and analogic), and heralds, in some of its tendencies, the fourth (naturalist), that the Neolithic era truly constitutes a "symbolic revolution." The whole of humanity past, present, and to come seems to be expressed here, but also the emergence of religious transcendence and its retreat as the precondition of secularization.

The Ordeal of the Town

Let me recapitulate. Girard offers a model of the "sacrificial crisis" *and* its victimary resolution, which is to say of the ordeal *and* the institution of sacrifice. Thanks to his analysis of images, Descola makes it possible to specify that this institution must have corresponded to the crystallization of two "world-compositions," the totemic and the analogic, which I have shown by distinguishing between, on the one hand, a specialized group of hunter-dancers in whom identification with the taboo animal persists, and on the other hand, the wild animal sacrifices that this specialized group makes possible. Finally, Hodder enables us to imagine that in the crystallization of these two central ontologies and in the contemporaneous mastery of sacrifice there could have been a solution to the powerful tension entailed by sedentism. Many clues lead one to think that the progress of the sacrificial institution is linked to that of urbanization, and vice versa. The expression "house sacrifices" used by Hodder with respect to new foundation-building techniques takes on its full meaning. This moment at which dwellings are built differently (perhaps, Hodder suggests, through "founding burials" of children or women) would also be the one at which one moves little by little, and thanks to greater symbolic complexity, from the preeminence of relics to the preeminence of images. This moment could then indeed be said to correspond to an interiorization, or to a refinement, of the sacrificial schema of death and resurrection. The images then become part of a cognitive dynamic; they constitute the grammar of an awareness, testify in turn to a mastery of beings and things, but also of time and space. The gods would thus be linked not simply to the state, as an anthropological tradition that came out of the work of Pierre Clastres was too quick to think, but also to pre-urban life. In the period of eleven centuries with which we are concerned, we would then see a sacrificial verticality being constructed on the remains of an originary animism (or shamanism).

Armed with this new model in terms of transformations, we can revisit and interpret differently the results of the excavations at Çatalhöyük. This transcendence, of totemic-analogic or sacrificial origin, must have been buttressed by the ancestral lineages that it reinforced, themselves linked to the cult of the dead, in this case to a complex use of animal and human relics, which were constantly extracted and reinserted in the walls and floors, thus weaving in repetitive fashion an entire network of analogies and correspondences. It is this domestic cult that makes

possible in the village the first assemblages around the "history houses." The use of these relics, as the collaborative work of Harvey Whitehouse and Hodder (Whitehouse and Hodder 2010) has shown, could be likened to the "esoteric" rumination (1) on the "low-frequency, high-intensity" rituals that were wild animal sacrifices, where exceptional individuals may have distinguished themselves; (2) on foundation rituals (burials of children under the threshold of the houses, burial of human skulls – probably ancestral relics – under load-bearing beams); and (3) on all the other burials (inasmuch as they are moments of familial or collective emotion, and the opportunity for exchanges with other inhabitants of the village). These events must, at rare intervals, have bound together subgroups gathered around ancestral houses. The "esotericism" that tied them together made possible a cult of the dead wherein the first outlines of a narrative of origins was formulated, this in the course of rituals comprising the veneration of bull trophies, a totemic identification with certain mammals and birds of prey, sacred dances and religious manipulation of animal and human skeletons (Czeszewska 2014). These advances by trial and error took place within an imbrication of humans, beings, and things that must have led to serious tensions during the "transitional period" of the village, where the religious solution could then be gradually implemented.

The dead ended up no longer being buried in the houses (by the time of the West Mound in the early sixth millennium BC). Cemeteries were presumably created outside. The houses were emptied of their relics and they and pottery were covered in images. The groups united around the ancestral houses, in the fascinated memory of great rituals, became fragmented into larger dwellings, which opened on to small gardens or manure piles. Another type of relationship, symbolized by the emergence of paintings, replaced the magico-religious memory of rare, foundational events (through plastering-unplastering, regular repainting of walls and bas-reliefs), and the growing tension within the networks of production and exchange. The outcome found to what must have been a crisis of sedentism thus, without a doubt, corresponds to an interiorization of the sacred (throughout the Middle East, ritual and art are gradually brought into houses) to which the flowering of images bears witness, and to the emergence of a feeling of individuality (Hodder 2011).

Another kind of repetition must then have been established: after the first, strictly domestic period of relics hidden and unveiled at regular intervals ("rituals of high frequency and low intensity") came new forms of imitation: the emergence of new, less geometrical animal figures, but also

of the fascinating motif of hands painted in different colors, which could be interpreted as marks of appropriation (Czeszewska 2014). These first affirmations of the self must have provoked properly "mimetic" rivalries, in the Girardian sense. Recall that this type of conflict pits two subjects against one another for the appropriation of an object. Blurring distinctions between the rivals, who imitate each other all the more violently inasmuch as they think they are demarcating their own differences, these contagious battles constitute a threat to the group's cohesion, which a local rivalry can end up poisoning entirely. Opposed to this "violent mimesis," which is both a matrix of conflicts and of their victimary resolution, is an "obedient mimesis," which structures rites and prohibitions. But it is these mimetic rivalries which must have shaken the ancient dominance networks.

After the repetition of domestic rituals and their breakdown at the moment of the village's greatest demographic density (up to South O or Level VI in Mellaart's terms), there must have come a new order, a new way of relating to others and the world. This period was characterized by the growing use of reproduction in decorative practices: the frequent use in the upper layers of the village of seals placed on cloth, no doubt also on human skin, which represented animals, traces (or not) of former totemic identifications. Not only "coming out of the walls," on which they are freely deployed, these images eventually "come out" of the village itself. This phenomenon of reproducibility may be indicative of the end of a certain relationship with the surrounding world. After the (animistic) entanglement of human and non-human spheres, and the difficult exit (totemic-analogic) from this first composition, by means of inscription in a given site and the regular and ritual consecration of this anchoring, there must have come the collective and individual liberation that opened up a period of territorial conquest. A new culture was founded.

Relics were replaced by images. These images had come out of the walls, to the point of miming, in the case of certain images painted on protuberances reminiscent of those found in Palaeolithic caves, this movement toward the spectator. As if to corroborate the reality of this movement of the images, Agata Czeszewska (2014) shows that the layers of plaster painted with images were regularly covered by other unpainted and painted layers. The movement of the images "emerging from the walls" was thus inscribed in the very work of the artists charged with painting the houses. This liberation of images coming toward the spectator may attest to a veritable "intentionality," to speak like the phenomenologists. After the cult of the dead, which assumed strong local roots (totemic identification with the leopard and other animals, then

wild animal sacrifices to consecrate the place), but which also assumed a haunting of individuals fixated on the past, came a more open relationship to time and space. We can assume that a more refined understanding of the origins of sedentism, made possible by hunting practices and by the institution of sacrifice and its attendant prohibitions, facilitated the spread of the Neolithic model throughout Anatolia : those who begin to acquire a ritual knowledge of their origins can create a future for themselves. Hence the "miracle" to which the sacrificial scenes bear witness: the miracle of a society that did not self-destruct, but that had found, at the heart of the danger of proximity, the means of a rebirth and a transformation.

Conclusion

This chapter suggests a scenario that makes it possible to interpret the evolution of images at Çatalhöyük in a different way. The framework provided by Hodder and the researchers that he has mobilized makes possible an encounter between Girard's mimetic theory and Descola's combinatory approach (which is based on a diachronic and synchronic classification of different types of ontologies). Bringing these two thinkers together has enabled us to shed light on the transition from relics to images at Çatalhöyük, this over the eleven centuries during which the site was occupied. This transition bears witness to a distance achieved with respect to the dead, to beings, and to things, but also to the emergence of a society that is extricating itself from a certain relationship to the world by means of increasingly developed sacrificial and symbolic practices. It can thus be concluded that the people of Çatalhöyük emerged victorious from this "ordeal of the town." The hunter-gatherers, assembled around restrictive networks, ended up expelling their demons and liberating themselves from the suffocating proximity in which they were living. It was at the heart of entanglement that the solution that launched the Neolithic model was found. If this intuition is borne out by later research, it will become possible to bring to light an elementary phenomenological structure: that of the image coming out of the wall. This type of phenomenality would correspond to the gradual discovery of a subjectivity.

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9

Stretching Girard's Hypothesis

Road Marks for a Long-Term Perspective

James Alison

What might those who follow the thought of René Girard have to offer to those currently excavating Çatalhöyük and Göbekli Tepe in Turkey? The answer to this question will depend to a great extent on how followers of Girard's thought, like myself and others in this volume, are able to match the generosity we have been shown by those involved in the discipline. I hope we can do something of this by making Girard's hypothesis available to people working in the area, clarifying it (especially where notorious misapprehensions about it have arisen), filling out some of its many lacunae (for instance, in the 80,000 or so years between the arrival of *Homo sapiens sapiens* and the axial era, from which most of Girard's evidence is derived), and showing that it does at least enable some intelligent questions to be asked of the sort which might lead those working at the 'trowel's edge' to look at elements of what they have seen in a different light.

With a view to setting the scene for this, then, I propose to start with some brief comments concerning the nature of Girard's rigorous insight, usually called 'mimetic theory,' which it seems appropriate to bring out in an archaeological context. Rather than follow these with a full-blown exposition of mimetic theory itself, I will refer the reader to Bill Johnsen's précis of Girard's thought in Chapter 2 this volume, adding to that only a few observations which point directly in the line of the argument I wish to follow. I will then fill out some of the questions about terminology which can lead to confusion, given the way different disciplines are accustomed to varying and scarcely overlapping associations accruing to the same word. By this means I hope I will be able to show that, as is the case in several other disciplines, Girard's insight, even when unknown, or partially

known and unappreciated, by the experts in a particular field, brings us remarkably close, in ways which would probably cause them surprise, to the centre of a number of arguments in which those experts are already involved. Finally, and very tentatively, I will attempt to ask some questions of the evidence that we have seen from the period between roughly 12,000 and 7,000 years ago, to show at least what a Girard-inspired question might be, in the face of a particular phase of human existence concerning which we have no spoken or written evidence, as to how our ancestors bound or related this or that artefact to each other.

Mimetic Theory, or, an Insight Made Rigorous

Girard always insisted that he was not the first to discover 'mimetic theory'. Examples he gives of others who had clearly understood it include Cervantes, Shakespeare and Dostoyevsky. Indeed Girard found other, more or less fully worked out versions, in ancient sources going back to Vedic, Greek, Hebrew and Latin cultures from as early as we have surviving texts. Girard's claim is to have been the first to try rigorously to thematise and theorise an insight that has typically been arrived at as part of a hard-won, and often dangerous wisdom achieved through the discoverer's own involvement in the issues of desire and violence which the insight describes.

In other words, and I think it important to stress this here: the insight is a self-critical one, and its theorisation is about the conditions of possibility of self-criticism at a personal and cultural level going back as far as when our ancestors became symbolic and then, as they became unmoored from their instincts, found themselves thrust into the beginnings of an awareness that they had become problems to themselves and to each other.

Because the insight is one about self-criticism, there are any number of 'ways in' to unpacking Girard's insight, and he himself constantly wrestled with new and better approaches to presenting it, never satisfied with how he had done so in this or that text. Most descriptions of Girard's thought follow a tripartite model whose three parts are: the mimetic nature of desire; the mechanism of the aleatory victim (commonly called 'the scapegoat mechanism'); and the subversion from within of the world created by the first two, coming into operation through the prophetic critique of sacrifice. I refer the reader to Bill Johnsen's exposition of these in Chapter 2 in this volume. Here I only expand a little on the second. In the next section I will give a fuller account of some of the questions raised by the third.

For present purposes, it suffices that the reader has grasped the way in which the observation that humans desire according to the desire of others leads directly to the question of how we survived our origins. Girard holds that our ancestors stumbled unawares into the mechanism of the aleatory victim, as the frenzied all against all, deriving from their rivalry, was diverted into an all against one. Their consequent and defining socialisation is a result of this mechanism, a violent means of protecting themselves against their own violence.

Some of the consequences of this mechanism becoming operative are fairly easy to understand: for these highly imitative animals, who now have both something new to imitate and a new sense of togetherness in their imitation, repeated imitation of this scenario gives rise to ritual, and eventually myth (as and when language comes into play). And alongside both of these, there arise prohibitions. These work to prevent the kind of behaviour leading to the terror of the original frenzy, but are often systematically infringed when it comes time for the group to re-enact the ritualised elements of the frenzy and its resolution.

Other consequences of the fact that we are dealing here with a *mechanism* are less obvious and demand some filling out. For instance, sometimes this scenario is referred to by Girard, and those associated with his thought, as an, or the, 'originary scene'. I think it important to point out what this originary scene is *not*, since misunderstanding comes very easily here. In the first place, it is not a claim, of the sort made by Freud in *Totem and Taboo* (1913), of a particular, single act (in Freud's case of group parricide) which happened once, at the threshold of hominisation, and therefore affects us all thereafter. Nor is it an 'originary scene' in the sense in which the early chapters of Genesis in the Bible have come, in popular (Christian) imagination, to function as a piece of 'revealed' palaeontology of origins to which the evidence must be made to conform. The term 'originary' is used by Girard to refer to that which brings something into being, and it is as an originary *mechanism* (something eminently replicable) that the scenario he describes enables the emergence of the symbolic sphere. Furthermore the mechanism comes into play through what seems like a systemic 'catastrophe' by which an ongoing mimetically fuelled crisis serves as a springboard between evolutionary processes and symbolic culture (Girard 2008, 109–110).

Girard is well aware that the scapegoat mechanism did not come suddenly from nowhere. While there are hints of it among many animals (he cites, for instance, Lorenz's geese who redirect their aggression, bonding over and against a third party (Lorenz 1966, 249–250, quoted in Girard

2008, 103)), it is not until you get a sufficiently social horde, pack or cohort that the imitation can become contagious and frenzied enough for the scapegoat mechanism to kick in and be learned from: 'In the process of the emergence of cultural elements, one also needs to stress that there is no absolute beginning' (Girard 2008, 97). I should, for the sake of clarity, point out here that Girard is well aware of the ways in which different disciplines use the word 'culture', so that he is not tied to the way that the word, etymologically, derives from the Latin *colēre* (to till the soil or tend) and thus from the invention of agri*culture* and the beginning of sedentary humanity. Nor does he restrict the word to the arrival of the fully fledged symbolic culture characteristic of *Homo sapiens sapiens*, though this is his main use of the word. He is happy, for instance, to point to elements of culture in the ways in which *Homo habilis* used tools as weapons, by contrast with simpler Australopithecine tool use, suggesting that some dimensions of what would later empower the mimetic crisis were already present around two million years ago (Girard 2008, 113).

Nevertheless, Girard's principal point is to emphasise that 'the creation of culture is engendered by religion through the victimary mechanism, which is in fact contingent and mechanistic … This is the result of a form of systemic selection, which lasted thousands of years' (Girard 2008, 98–99). And again:

> By defining the scapegoat mechanism as a random process, one has to see it as a series of incremental steps. One cannot point out the exact isolated moment when it happens and, finally, culture emerges. It has to be seen in a time-frame of dozens or even hundreds of thousands, of years. In this long history of the 'discovery' of the scapegoat mechanism … animal redirection of aggression [may be included] as a first step in this evolution, like a sort of infra-scapegoat ritual. It is a very complex process. It is necessary to have a group, a pack, as a prerequisite for the full development of the scapegoat mechanism…
>
> (Girard 2008, 105)

What, finally, is offered by this multi-millennial originary scenario is an account of the development of symbolicity as the force behind the discontinuity between other animals and humans: not merely a form of evolution, but also a systemic 'catastrophe' or upheaval which breaks the link between 'pointing' and 'things' such that something starts to stand for something else. A surrogate victim is no longer killed in purely aleatory fashion, but the group imitates its own earlier behaviour so that there is some degree of staging, such that a real victim is killed who is also symbol, or substitute, for a previously effective cadaver (Girard 2008, 106–107).

In this way, Girard insists that it is religion, sacrifice, that has domesticated humans: 'Religion is structure without a subject, because the subject is the mimetic principle. I think one can have a purely realistic and materialistic interpretation of it. What I am suggesting is an integration of culture and biology through the scapegoat mechanism' (Girard 2008, 125).

The Subversion from within of the Sacrificial Mechanism

Before moving on to examine difficult words like 'religion', I need to spend some time making more complex the third element of Girard's mimetic insight: the way in which the long-running symbol-producing 'catastrophe' which inflected our evolutionary origins began to be subverted from within, as the gateway to modern humanity.

Fundamental to the working of the mechanism of the aleatory, or surrogate, victim is a certain sort of ignorance or miscognition (called by Girard 'méconnaissance'). For, naturally enough, where there is doubt, and thus dissent, concerning whether or not the right person (or group) has been 'got', as the coming together of all against all yields to the unanimity of all against one, then unanimity and peace are never reached. Where unanimity and peace are reached, these are themselves sufficient, from the surviving participants' perspective, to indicate that the right one was expelled. But what would be intolerable is the suggestion that the selection of the expelled one was in fact arbitrary, the result of a mechanism. And that neither is the obvious deadness of the dead one any indication of malfeasance, nor are the peace and unanimity of the survivors any indication of righteousness. For in that way no decision could be made, no order could be founded.

So Girard studied an enormous number of myths and rituals from all over the world, as well as accounts of life from ancient axial-age texts, and perceived that all the elements of the scapegoat mechanism are to be found present in very large numbers of those texts, but always as *structure*, never as theme. By this he meant that different moments in the originary scenario are described – the imitative build-up to frenzy, the loss of order, the ganging together against one, the resulting peace and fruitfulness of what followed, the gradual breakdown of the same (which he refers to as the 'sacrificial crisis') and the starting up of the mechanism again. But the accounts are always muddled, with different moments attributed to different agencies, responsibilities shared with improbably

anthropomorphic or theriomorphic figures and so on. In other words, the account is a mendacious account given by the survivors of just such scapegoating scenarios, and their heirs, in which group responsibility is clearly diminished, and other forces are brought in to account for the successful establishment, through expulsion, of peace, order and fruitfulness in their land.

The one thing you do not see in these accounts is the scapegoat mechanism as *theme*. That is to say, described as such. For the more clearly what had really happened in the particular variant of the originary scenario lived by this particular group is seen, the more impossible would have been living with the knowledge derived therefrom: that their order and stability depended on a random murder, and that all that they considered to be good, just, fair and so on rested on a guilty secret.

What Girard noted, emerging in the axial period, is the possibility of what had previously only been available as *structure* (driving its participants to behave according to its dictates unawares), starting to become available as *theme*. The most sustained evidence of this is to be found in the Hebrew scriptures. There, time and again, far more ancient stories are to be found in re-edited form, but with elements of the scapegoat mechanism brought more and more clearly into focus, depicted with ever more straightforward, we might say, anthropological clarity, and with the cast-out one being given a voice as the one who has told the truth, by comparison with the mendacity of those whose fake peace and unanimity would be constructed through his or her murder. This is accompanied, of course, by the critique, which runs throughout the Bible's prophetic literature, of sacrifice as being not far removed from murder, somehow involved in cover-up and fake goodness, always ineffective, and not really having anything to do with God.

Outside the biblical sphere, Girard points out how Sophocles comes, in *Oedipus Rex*, to introduce into his account of the expulsion, and to tolerate, some suggestions that maybe the accusations against Oedipus were mythical, and that only partisanship decided between Oedipus and Creon, even though Sophocles then steps back to give the 'right' answer for a prize-winning dramatist, and does not break the mythic illusion (Girard 1977, 68–80). Following Girard, Cesáreo Bandera has made the same observation concerning the end of the *Aeneid*, where Virgil, somewhat despairingly, appears to intuit the randomly murderous structure of Roman society, without glimpsing a way beyond it (Bandera 1994, 130–174).

Nevertheless it is in the accounts of Christ's Passion from the four canonical Gospels that Girard sees the most complete culmination of the process of the subversion from within of the scapegoat mechanism. Each in its own way insists that what Jesus was doing in going to his death was of fundamental anthropological significance; that the murdered one was innocent; and that in the light of these events, all sacrifice would hereafter be put into question, and become impossible to carry out in good conscience. Along with this, any cultural structure that depends on some sort of unanimous 'we' over against a wicked 'they' would start to crumble, since its justifications would lose credibility.

Girard lays particular emphasis on the work of the biblical texts as having brought the intolerable knowledge of what structured the 'méconnaisssance' into the open. He claims that modern western history, exposed at length to the instantiated possibility that our victim is innocent, has been culturally marked at depth by the loss of the ability to sacrifice with a good conscience. The loss of sacred mechanisms for controlling desire has led, on the one hand, to the potential for both freedom and responsibility, and on the other, to the ever increasing unleashing of imitative desire without any external means to check our potential for rivalry. Girard, although himself, from the time of his late thirties, a practising Catholic, was perfectly clear that the ecclesiastical institution has functioned at least as much to block or attenuate the insight upon which it was founded as to disseminate it, and that the prophetic critique of sacrifice has often been kept alive independently of, and often enough in opposition to, those with a confessional attachment to it.

A Reasonable Question

Given that I am both a Catholic and a confessional theologian, it does seem fair that I should have to satisfy the curiosity of any modern archaeologist who, whether or not they have any personal confessional attachment, would be properly allergic to any apparently scientific approach to their field which seems to mask a partisan religious agenda. So, is Girard's hypothesis too 'Christian' to be taken seriously? Is it, for instance, a sophisticated-seeming attempt to use the tools of modern archaeology and palaeontology to recover 'evidence' that might defend dogmatic formulations concerning 'Original Sin'?

Here I would say that Girard himself saw no rivalry between the theological consequences of his thought and his anthropological insight and field of study. But he was very concerned that the anthropological insight

be treated as just that, and developed and studied anthropologically, without any extrinsic other-worldly elements being brought to bear. He was, indeed, excited by the capacity for scientific truthfulness, understood in a fairly positivist way, that the overcoming of the scapegoat mechanism in the modern world has made available. He begins his book *The Scapegoat* (Girard 1986) with a French poem from the time when the Black Death swept Europe. A particular outburst of the plague is described, its cause attributed to the local Jews (by a timely revelation from heaven). These are then massacred, at which point the plague comes to an end. The poem is no great work of art, and in quoting it Girard seeks to bring out something that is both obvious and raises a question.

When any modern reader reads this poem, they engage, without even thinking about it, in a very subtle hermeneutic. For none of us thinks the poem entirely true ('the plague happened as described, caused in the way the poet described, and was brought to an end in the same way'). Or entirely false ('the plague did not happen, events are not caused in the way described, and no Jews were massacred'). On the contrary, we realise immediately that there is a very particular mixture of truth and falsehood in the account: the plague did happen, but was not caused by the local Jews; the local Jews were murdered, but this was not what caused the plague to stop. In other words, we automatically determine what in the account is true and what is false, aware that we are reading a description of something that did happen, a certain sort of lynching, as recounted from the mendacious perspective of the lynchers. And we would certainly regard as untrue, partisan and anti-scientific any attempt to defend the truthfulness of the lynchers' account of causality.

Girard's question is: where does this scientific certainty (and it is both scientific and certain) come from? His answer is: from the slow work of the biblical texts, and in particular the texts of the Passion, in making available, as central to any form of truth-telling, the reverse perspective on exactly the same scenario: that the lynchers lie, that their victim is falsely accused, and that those who hate him or her do so without any cause beyond their own mimetic entanglement.

My answer, then, to the question concerning whether Girard's Christianity is a disqualifying factor in his being taken seriously in a scientific endeavour is this: the thesis that Christian texts and accompanying representations (for instance, Grünewald's *The Isenheim Altarpiece*) have had a cultural impact in exactly the way described, as tending to cast doubt on the righteousness of persecutors and tending to raise the question of the possible innocence, especially of unanimously hated

victims, is a thesis which is able to be defended or attacked independently of the confessional stance of those involved.

Indeed, flowing from the same insight as above, Girard's thought offers a particular account of western (and now global) secularisation, and the way in which that secularisation is positively dependent on Christianity (rather than something happening in reaction, or opposition, to Christianity). This has much in common with the understanding of secularisation in thinkers like Marcel Gauchet and Charles Taylor, the value of whose insights are appreciated independently of confessional attachment or its lack. And of course it is the case that many of those who follow Girard's thought and have contributed actively in its development have no confessional commitment to Christianity, either because they have no confessional commitment at all, or because they do not find their Girardian studies to be in conflict with their, e.g., Jewish or Buddhist commitments.

For reasons of time and space, I have chosen not to go here into the question of the doctrine of Original Sin and its relation, if any, to palaeontology. For those interested, two Girardian thinkers have independently published book-length treatments of this issue (Alison 1998; Schwager 2006). The former treatment regards sin as an ancillary and not a defining reality: something known *in its being forgiven*. This makes 'exactly how we came to be the sort of animal that finds itself undergoing being set free from something' much less crucial for doctrine. And at the same time, much more a matter of open-ended study than of dogmatic assertion of privileged insight into an irrecoverable element of prehistory.

Before leaving the question of Girard's Christianity, however, a further point is in order. Immediately after Girard raises the question, with relation to Guillaume de Machaut's plague poem described above, as to where we get our automatic interpretative lens from, he goes on to point out that the Oedipus story, in both its mythical and its dramatised forms, is structurally identical with that same poem. Why, Girard asks, should we not treat the ancient Greek story to the same interpretative reading as the medieval Christian one? If we do, we find that the people of Thebes resolved a crisis which included some form of plague by expelling the swollen-footed foreigner who'd married their richest lady, following accusations of parricide and incest which were every bit as firmly believed, and every bit as mendacious, as the medieval accusations against the Jews.

In other words, the very same insight that Girard sets out can be read forwards into an account of secular modernity and backwards into what

we learn about people from much earlier periods, derived from their own accounts. This yields a very dynamic hermeneutic, since it sees nothing in a linear fashion. At any stage of history, any literary artefact, and indeed, with much greater difficulty, any artefact at all, can be looked at as a particular trace of where humans had reached in their being structured from within by the scapegoat mechanism, with all the many, and entirely unexpected collateral discoveries which have, themselves, enriched a feedback loop to other discoveries. Furthermore, that our ability to read those traces, where murder and mendacity are commonplace, is itself made available by a certain undoing of the same scapegoat mechanism, such that we, and our capacity to analyse, are simultaneously the beneficiaries of the mechanism and of its undoing. Because of this we are not entirely foreigners in relation to our predecessors, and so are able to be somewhat more empathetic to, and less dismissive of, their logic and their explanations, where these are available.

So, This is a Hypothesis about Religion?

The reader thus far might be forgiven for thinking this is a hypothesis about religion, but I hope to disabuse you, and would like to do so in conversation with Maurice Bloch (2010), whose paper 'Is there religion at Çatalhöyük … or are there just houses?' is of exemplary clarity and insight. But first, some definitional issues.

The words 'religion' and 'religious' are notoriously slippery. This is so whether used in the medieval European sense of someone's *religio*, the canonically defined order or community (e.g. Franciscan, Benedictine, Carmelite) to which, unlike the vast majority of the population, or even of priests, some few might belong as an act of individual commitment; or in the early modern sense of an 'especially' violent sphere of ideological and partisan discord subsequent on the European Reformation over against which nascent nation-states could define themselves, self-flatteringly, as somehow bearers of peace; or in the sense of large socio-cultural groupings of a confessional or semi-confessional nature; or in the more recent sense, of a specific, but supposedly universal set of adaptive behaviours that are somehow part of what has made us viable as humans and have something to do with (positive) human values.

Girard's hypothesis concerning desire and violence offers what appears, at first sight, to be a firm underpinning for a strengthened account of the importance of religion in the human sciences. After all, the Girardian hypothesis does not see 'religion', 'sacrifice' or other elements

of 'sacrality' as epiphenomena to a humanity springing from a fundamentally e.g. economic generative matrix, epiphenomena which might be either illusory and alienating, or, just conceivably, mildly helpful. It describes our ancestors as having learnt how to protect themselves on a regular basis against their own violence through stumbling into a repetitive mechanism bringing all group members violently against one, and thus to temporary concord. In this way a mechanism repeated by our ancestors gradually became sacrifice and birthed symbolic culture, making humanity as we know it possible. So it could be said that Girard reverses the previous, enlightenment, picture by making 'religion' the matrix and all other human institutions the epiphenomena.

However, while this formulation is polemically valid (i.e. truer than its reverse), it has a more drastic consequence than might meet the eye. And that is that the word 'religion' ceases to have any explanatory power. For where everything has a religious matrix, then nothing is specifically religious, with the result that the word 'religion' no longer has any bite on any specific reality.

It is this that seems to me to be the strength of Girard's hypothesis (and I say this as a confessional theologian): the tools it offers are methodologically entirely atheistic, and have no need for any special sphere of the mysterious, the sacred or the religious, which are somehow to be respected in their ambivalence and are thus off-limits to the normal workings of reason. As a matter of fact, the typical reaction of Girardian thought faced with anything mysterious, sacred, religious or ambivalent is to seek out the quite straightforward anthropological relational processes that might underlie the behaviours in question, and which give a rational account of both the valences in evidence. It is what makes us *relational* in the ways that we now discover to have formed us which are important in any discussion of how humans have come to be what they are. The fact that all human relations are structured in certain ways could only usefully be described as 'religious' where there is an alternative – a 'non-religious' way of being human – on offer. There isn't, except eschatologically (for there is no Temple in the New Jerusalem of The Apocalypse of St John).

In this sense, I suggest that Girard's thought encourages us to do with the words 'religion' and 'religious' something of what Bruno Latour's Actor–Network Theory does with the words 'social' and 'society'. Latour (2005) invites his readers to do, in effect, what Wittgenstein recommended when he pointed out that, sometimes, certain words need to be taken to the laundry. There is indeed in Latour's approach a quality recognisable to

a theologian as a strongly apophatic approach to the words in question, seeking to weed out and exorcise all of the many idols and phantasms by which 'social' has acquired elements of causation which are not its own. These then tend to mask, or prevent the need for the study of, the much smaller dynamic movements by which that which is (genuinely) social is in fact constantly created and transmogrified (Latour 2005). I will hope to propose something of the same concerning the word 'religion' when coming alongside what Bloch proposes is 'there' and 'not there' in Çatalhöyük.

Having then cleared out the mental detritus that accrues when 'religion' has acquired elements of causation not its own, Girard's thought would press us towards a relational account of the emergence of any particular entity, hence very much swimming alongside the call for relational archaeology by Christopher Watts and his colleagues (Watts 2013). This follows very directly from Girard's insight that we desire according to the desire of the other, for it would mean that entities, both simple objects and more complex constructs, become what they are by designation that can be imitated over time, and that their designation is very strictly the work of networks, themselves in constant flux as they work to produce both the desirers and the desired. That there is a constant, and often adventitious, feedback network between things and their users, each altering the other over time, is part of what we see in the process of the domestication of animals. I suspect, given time, that relational archaeology of this sort, aware of the long-term effects of the scapegoat mechanism, might show how elements of animism and other forms of human and animal imbrication (Whitridge 2013) were elements in our slow path to self-reflexive human discovery. Furthermore, as I shall suggest later, other animals were not merely passive partners in our domestication (nor we merely active partners in theirs), but were given a certain agency in our becoming who we are by their entanglement with us in the outworkings of the scapegoat mechanism over time.

So, this aside on the word 'religion' has left us with the methodological atheism that becomes both the believer and the atheist (who can agree that God or not-God are not one of the gods, not something extra in the universe, and that therefore the interesting discussion here is one concerning the shape of idolatry, a matter that is purely anthropological, relational and this-worldly). Thereafter the question becomes one of a sympathetic description of the route(s) by which a relatively small number of dangerously unmoored simians had the good fortune to stumble into the possibility, and survive the upheaval, of becoming the incipiently self-critical beings that we imagine ourselves to be.

For and Against Bloch (But Almost Entirely For)

In his paper quoted at the beginning of the last section, Bloch summarises a programmatic essay in which he sets out what he means by the 'transcendental social':

> Many aspects of the social organisation of animals closely related to our species such as the chimpanzees or bonobos are reminiscent of humans. In all three species there is continual politicking and competition for power, rank and alliance. This side of things I call the transactional. However there is also, at least, one fundamental difference between non-humans and us. Humans phenomenologically create what have been called roles and corporate groups. These, in some way, have an existence that transcends the people who are endowed with these roles or who belong to these groups. What I mean by 'transcend' here is that these roles and groups seem to exist independently of people and on a very different timescale…
>
> Furthermore, roles and corporate groups link up to form apparent patterns, which some earlier anthropologists called, somewhat misleadingly, 'social structures'. This largely invisible transcendental social, separate from people and the strategies of their lives, is something quite absent from the social of animals other than humans.
>
> An obvious question about this transcendental imagination is how it is that it can be given phenomenological reality. Probably the most important mechanism for doing this is ritual.
>
> (Bloch 2010, 156–157)

What a pleasure to find oneself on the same page as such a distinguished source! For while Bloch does not seek to give more than a synchronic account of the operation of the transcendental imagination, Girard's scapegoat mechanism is exactly a highly ambitious hypothesis, albeit an extraordinarily parsimonious one, yielding a diachronic account of how 'this transcendental imagination … can be given phenomenological reality'. It is this that I would like to flesh out here.

Now that we have removed some of the misconceptions surrounding Girard's originary scene, we can examine it in more detail as an account of the runaway feedback loop that was accidentally creative of humanity. Or, in the language of Jean-Pierre Dupuy (1992), an account of how we unknowingly bootstrapped ourselves into existence. I'd like to go slowly here, since what is involved is so foreign to our normal individualist and cognitivist presuppositions concerning 'selves', and our assumption that something recognisable as a modern 'self' must have been 'available' if we are talking about humans, that it can be difficult to show the mechanism whose working gave structure to the group relationality which only over a very, very long time would begin to yield something like the 'self'.

The key 'moment' in this emergence of a transcendental imagination is where, in the originary scene, the frenzied all-against-all has yielded to the all-against-one. At the moment that the 'one' becomes a cadaver and the group finds itself at peace, a shared peaceful attention to that cadaver emerges. That shared peaceful attention to the cadaver, emerging from a violent terror made more fearful as it is remembered, is exactly the space in which something the group has in fact done *themselves* (brought themselves to unanimity by killing one of their members who is in principle indistinguishable from themselves) appears to them under the guise of something that *has been done to them*. What has been done to them? 'Well, somehow this mysterious cadaver must have been more important than it seemed: the very fact that it was able to produce peace among us in being killed, means that we must have been right to consider it to have been responsible for causing the rivalry among us when alive.'

What this means is that who 'we' are is, *and has always been*, automatically and constitutively in a relationship to 'another' who is seen as in some way exercising a protagonism amongst and upon us. I think it vital to stress this. When Girard talks of the 'méconnaissance' or miscognition surrounding the lynch death, he is not only referring to the question of the group's ignorance of the random nature of what they consider to be culpability, and so of the victim's responsibility in the *moral* sense; they also misplace responsibility in the *causal* sense – the victim is perceived as in some sense causative both before the group knew it (during the build-up to the frenzy) and after it, in bringing about the peace. Hence the tendency to divinisation of the victim in some accounts.

What drives the ritual repetition of this is the sense, one which is simultaneously both true and false, that there is 'another' moving the group to do this, so as to produce the same outcome as before. The account of the birth of social transcendence, and hence of our humanity as we know it, is the same as the birth of this 'other' who moves us. And from the moment this 'other' came into being, we have had no access to each other or to anything else except through it. All our relationships – to each other, to other animals, to space, to time – are hereafter structured from within by this 'other' *without our knowing it*. And this means that all of the group's wrestling with any problem we have is in fact going to be a wrestling with ourselves, projected and misplaced on to animals, trees, mountains, stars, years and months.

This means that, for humans, idolatry (unwitting self-formation by means of self-reinforcement perceived as and attributed to the self-mystificatory 'other') is the precondition of objectivity, not some sort of

defection from a prior objectivity. There is no linear path from instinctual objectivity to cultural objectivity. The extraordinary path towards being able to appreciate *what is* as relatively indifferent, independent of our instincts, group needs, mechanisms of togetherness and so on, is itself an amazing path in which *being wrong, being confused* was an absolutely essential part of our road towards *being right*.

I stress this since what Girard offers is, among other things, an account of the inner structure of idolatry, or, to use Bloch's language, the invisible transcendental social, as it formed us. If this is the case then, at every single stage along the way towards our becoming self-critical with relation to the originary scene, and thus incipiently objective, the reality which we now see as human has been structured from within by our being moved by this dynamic.

Let me point briefly to three of the many areas in which we can imagine just this mechanism at work, each from the cusp of the shift from hunter-gatherers to sedentarism available to study in or close to Neolithic Anatolia: shamans, domestication and planting. In the case of the first, we can get some sense of what it might have been like for those whose gender dysphoria, intersexed nature, sexual orientation or other distinction might have set them up to take a particularly visible part in the way a small group wrestled with itself via its 'other'. Such people are likely to have had elements of the 'prophetic' (in the sense of being able to point out to the group the sort of truths that become visible from someone who has both insider and outsider status); of the 'priestly', both as necessarily skilled avoiders of being sacrificed through developing their capacity convincingly to point their fingers accusingly at others, and occasionally as sacrifices themselves; and of the 'royal', in the sense of some of them managing to live with the suspended sentence of victimhood for long enough that they became the visible symbol of some sort of order.

Such shamanistic roles, as well as the likelihood that frequently enough shamans would be wanderers (both for psychological reasons, and often enough, out of imposition) and might end up as bands of 'prophets', could have inclined to what we would call charismatic and enthusiastic trances, as they acted out the social dynamics of their groups-of-origin among themselves. However, if enough of them spent long enough together such that they were able to share what one might call their 'liminal' knowledge, then they might start to formalise among themselves the sort of order emerging from spontaneous 'sacrifice' which they had only known previously as its half-terrified, half-sacralised recipients. And so you might get sanctuaries developing (Göbekli Tepe and other T-pillar

sites), which by becoming symbols of 'outside' to so many smaller and more disparate groups, may actually have allowed those groups to draw near and share time and space with each other for a while, thus beginning the phase of precarious shared group wrestling with the 'other' which we call sedentarism.

Please note, however, that this is the unintended consequence of something that could not possibly have been imagined by its early participants. Sometimes wheels just spin, sometimes they hit enough other spinning wheels for something to turn into a gear and then something completely different is born which in retrospect seems an obvious outcome, as which it could never have appeared at the time.

The birth of agriculture can be described following the same pattern. Wild grains were clearly eaten by humans for millennia before they were cultivated deliberately. It seems no great feat of the imagination to posit some such seeds being thrown, as part of funeral rites, on to or into the burial places of significant dead people or animals. That it was the turning of the soil and the decomposing flesh beneath that in fact caused the grain to grow with greater abundance will have been a much later lesson than the observation that, as part of the group's wrestling with its 'other', certain deaths led to greater fertility, and that if you acted repeatedly as though you were burying the dead (by turning the earth) and invoked the mysterious, and eventually divinised, protagonist of the fertility, you could, at least some of the time, get the same results. Once again, spin the wheel often enough (which is what ritual is) and, just sometimes, it will lead to an interaction that will in fact invent something world-changing. We will have done it, but it will seem to us, for the longest time, that 'another' did something to and for us.

And finally, the domestication of animals, starting with wolves. These first were, I suspect (slightly against Girard), not enfolded into our sense of 'other' so much as victims, but as runners alongside us in a victimary hunt, where we could imitate them: they were the first animal to become 'we' not 'they' in our wrestling with our 'other'. That they could also imitate us, starting from cub/puppyhood, to the point that their need for an alpha could be fixated on us, and they become part-sharers in a human pattern of desire, is probably our race's earliest love story. That they have shorter lifespans than ours could have been vital in offering us evidence of what worked or not in bringing up our own offspring – part of the process by which they domesticated us. Other animals, bovine, caprine, ovine and porcine, were perhaps first kept in small numbers as 'sacrificanda' until growing numbers caused what could have been just a spinning wheel of

ritual to bump into the reality that their imitative capacity is such that they can, in fact (and with canine help), be herded, and tended peacefully. With that there developed a knowledge of the waterways and uses of compost which will have both fed in to, and needed to be kept separate from, the growing accidental knowledge about grains.

This picture of the unintended ritual-borne consequences of the victimary structure of the transcendental social imagination over time coincides very fruitfully with Descola's four 'ontological' stages (Descola 2013), as brilliantly demonstrated by my colleague Benoît Chantre in Chapter 8 of this present volume. First the *animist*, corresponding to the world of shamans where the wrestling with the social other projected shared interiority into the non-human world while being aware of a difference of bodies; the *totemic* where the distinction between interiorities and bodies shifts into a continuum such that humans, non-human animals and places can share the transcendental imagination, including protagonism; the *analogical*, where identifications are breaking down, interiorities and physicalities are perceived as different, and what we might call lateral thinking is at work detecting likenesses and relationships between things that are losing a certain transcendence and protagonism; and finally, the *naturalist*, where the separation between the human and the non-human is increasingly absolute, and with it there is installed that domination of 'nature' by 'culture' whose heirs we are.

By bringing together Bloch's synchronic transcendental imagination, Descola's ontological stages and Girard's positing of an omnipresent structuring ritual-borne victimary mechanism with unintended consequences, it seems that we have a comparatively finely tuned dynamic model by which to give richly complex and open-ended interpretations to many particular phenomena in the pre-literate era. I mention 'open-ended' since, unlike models which suppose our ancestors 'knowing what they were doing' in some very determined and rational way, this interpretation leaves plenty of room for futility – things going round in circles without ever leading to anything, and just occasionally, and spectacularly, forging a path towards learning which changed us from within.

Back to Anatolia

In this last section, I would like to step back from the 'big picture' to concentrate on a much smaller question: an attempt at a very amateurish application of the foregoing to a matter of curiosity for me at Çatalhöyük: why the constant very fine replastering of inside walls?

With such exactitude, and deliberate variations in exactitude as regards what was covered over and repainted? And why the regular fill-ins of houses, after a maybe forty- or eighty-year cycle? I first came to the site in 2013, armed with the (typically Girardian) question: 'how did the denizens of this place protect themselves against the risks of their own violence?' But in fact the question about Çatalhöyük that the place spontaneously elicited from me, and the one I have kept asking since, was 'what was its "other"?' I couldn't conceive of a village that was a lone *holon*, not part of some network of similar *holoi* interaction between which gave each other to be. And of course Çatalhöyük was inserted into networks: *Homo sapiens* is an inveterate wanderer – shell from the Red Sea region has been found at the site; obsidian used at Çatalhöyük was mined in mountains at least 120 km from the site; and as DNA decoding advances, it becomes known that it's likely that Çatalhöyük was, at least at some stage, virilocal, with non-related women brought in from elsewhere (sometimes, perhaps, violently, or maybe the violence was 'ludic'). But from where?

There is no obvious 'Paris' to this 'London', no obvious 'Barça' tribe close at hand to this 'Real Madrid', a 'them', rivalry with whom makes 'us' proud to be who we are. No obvious family structure seems to have been either known, observed or celebrated. The relationship between infants buried in floors and the buildings that arose is such that it is not clear whether it was typical infant mortality or some sort of sacrifice that was at work. Just as it is not clear whether the frequent foundation burials point to people being buried in the houses of the living, or whether they point rather to living people having opted to dwell in the houses of the dead. Tombs with add-ons, or houses with sunk-ins?

The question then became for me: at what stage were the inhabitants of Çatalhöyük in their wrestling with the victimarily structured social other, such that they had what we can call houses to begin with? And that these were organised and decorated in the ways they were? In Bloch's suggestion that, at Çatalhöyük, there was 'no religion, just houses', the only word which seems to me out of place is 'just'. Houses are not obvious. Bloch is happy to see the transcendental imagination at work in the phases of decoration (bucrania et al.) in the houses, but seems to me to underestimate the way in which the group dynamic which is impelled by the transcendental imagination – wrestling with its 'other' – is what is at work in producing houses *at all*, let alone such closely packed ones, ones with no apparent 'on site' public spaces. In other words, I wonder whether part of my answer to the question 'what is the "other" at Çatalhöyük?' might

be: 'It is to be found as a changing, and indeed inventive, relationship with housing.'

One of the factors which I posit may have been at work here is the development of memory. We are so used to an individualised account of memory that it is difficult to take on board the movement by which, as Jan Assmann has illuminatingly developed, it is culture that gives us a memory, stretches and reinforces it (Assmann 1992), so that it becomes part of the 'other' which runs us from within, and with which we wrestle. As Assmann points out, we are used to an approximately forty year 'living memory' span – in other words, we take as good evidence the memories of sixty-something year olds, concerning events that happened as far back as their twenties; from witnesses much older than seventy looking back to when they were younger than eighteen, not so much. And of course this is changing now, with healthy longevity, and memories reinforced by film, archive material and so forth. Not so the ancient world – even after the advent of literacy made relatively time-independent acts of communication from yesteryear available. Anthropologists point out that typically pre-literate peoples have accurate memories of two or three generations of their own families, but that *even after the advent of literacy* their memories of what we would call 'historical events' – things that happened, but were not directly related to their kin – went back no further than twenty years (see Meskell 2003, with reference to McDowell, on the remains of Deir el Medina).

It beggars the imagination (and I mean that somewhat literally) how little stretched the memory span may have been among hunter-gatherers before the first monumental 'sanctuaries' with their T-stone structures in eastern Anatolia became evidence of a living human past beyond their own generations. It is astounding also to think of how, within the first hundred years of their existence, the monuments of Göbekli Tepe will have already been considered unfathomably ancient by those who partook of whatever happened there – while their constantly changing feedback on projected memories over the remaining thirteen centuries in which they were living reference points is unimaginable.

By the time we come to Çatalhöyük, fully two thousand years after the end of Göbekli Tepe, I wonder whether the issue of the formation of memory as part of the 'other', which would be to some extent given new direction with the invention of literacy a few thousand years after the end of Çatalhöyük, had not become acute. And I mean this in the sense that, with the increasing complexity of living together as both animal domestication and grain cultivation advanced (which it did throughout the

Çatalhöyük period), memory span and accuracy, not only of the seasons (for which the moon and the stars work well) but also of narrative possibilities of belonging (simultaneously both what we belong to and what belongs to us), family, and living together, became increasingly insufficient for what was required of it. Faced with this insufficiency of memory, and before the arrival of the first scratchings of literacy which allowed vengeance to be deferred over time (thus inventing debt and projected time for repayment), the wrestling with the 'other' may well have taken the form of a hyper-ritualistic attitude towards housing as a way of stretching time.

Thus what Ian Hodder once referred to as the 'aggressive egalitarianism' seemingly present at Çatalhöyük might be less about egalitarianism and more about a need to remember belonging in order to cope with the growing complexity of togetherness, and the risks of serious intergroup violence that this may have engendered. If this were the case, then the constant ritualised replastering of walls, the regular half fill-ins of houses, the accuracy of access to buried ones beneath floors, and their retrieval and possible circulation may very well have functioned as an incipient internal mnemonic system, itself part of the keeping of the peace given how many other possible sources of discord might erupt.

In this sense, I wonder whether referring to those houses at Çatalhöyük which seem to contain strong links with their own past layers as 'history houses' isn't rather truer than might have been thought when the term was coined. It is not that they were houses which, as it happened, contained histories and memories: they were a ritual system, and maybe not an entirely successful one, of extending memory under pressure that took the form of, a perhaps somewhat insistent (maybe even 'aggressive'), creation, placement, maintenance and re-creation of houses.

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10

Girard's Anthropology vs. Cognitive Archaeology

Jean-Pierre Dupuy

The Challenge of Religion

For some time now a group of influential archaeologists have been striving to integrate in their discipline a number of concepts and models that they believe can be derived from cognitive science, and more especially from cognitive anthropology, evolutionary cognitive psychology, and cognitive neuroscience. This fledgling discipline calls itself "cognitive archaeology." It has great ambitions, as shown by the following prophecy made by two of its major proponents: "It appears that as processual archaeology revolutionized archaeology in the 1960s and 1970s, cognitive archaeology will revolutionize the 1990s and even the early part of the twenty-first century" (Renfrew and Zubrow 1994: xiii)

In tandem with cognitive anthropology, one of the ambitions of cognitive archaeology is to account for the birth of religion and its role in the emergence of complex societies. On the part of cognitive anthropology, a recent discipline itself, there is nothing remarkable in this, since its proponents have understood that they can realize their ambition of conquering the vast continent of the humanities and social sciences, philosophy included, only on the condition of succeeding first of all in explaining what remains for them a scandal: the universal presence of religion in all known societies. For religion is for most of them the height of irrationality. Darwinian selection acts in the same way as Occam's razor: hating wastefulness, it eliminates the superfluous and, like a utilitarian judge, ruthlessly punishes everything that strays from the optimum. How could the grotesque extravagance of religious practices and beliefs have been allowed to pass through its selective filter?

We will focus on the Near Eastern Neolithic, and more especially the site of Çatalhöyük. In that case at least it seems that cognitive archaeology has come a long way to a point that is not very far from Girard's anthropology, since it has established a connection between the violence that obtained there and the emergence of the sacred (Girard 1977 [1972]; Hodder 2010). As we shall see, the distance that separates them remains considerable. The main goal of this chapter is to situate Girard's theory by contrast with the cognitive archaeology story. My critical strategy will be the following. I will first contrast those two anthropologies in terms of their structures, methods, and explanatory powers. I will then flesh out the logical argument which I believe supports the reasoning of cognitive archaeologists when it comes to explaining the relationship between violence and the sacred in the Near Eastern Neolithic, while presenting an internal criticism that does not appeal to Girard's anthropology. I will end up showing how the latter can elegantly solve a number of problems that cognitive anthropology and archaeology stumble upon.

Emergence and Persistence of Religion

The first contrast to be noted is that the anthropologists the archaeologists refer to most often (Benz and Bauer 2013; Mithen 1997; Renfrew 2008; Watkins 2005) have only contempt for their object of study, religion – a remarkable exception to the neutrality of science, if one thinks of it. Pascal Boyer (2001: 255, 321, 320, emphasis in the original) regards rituals as cognitive "gadgets," and maintains that there is "something dramatically flawed *in principle* about religion as a way of knowing things," with the result that in the Church's competition with science to explain "what happens in the world … [e]very battle has been lost and conclusively so." Boyer has influenced a number of prominent scholars like Richard Dawkins (2006: 97, 104, 188–189). The latter argues that religious beliefs are irrational, nonsensical, and pathological; that they spread like a virus, infecting the brains they attack; that they teem like parasites, vermin, and cockroaches, infesting human populations; and that we should be ashamed of holding them. Pascal's wager is the wager of a coward, we are told. As for the Gospels, the only thing that separates them from *The Da Vinci Code* is that this is a modern fiction, whereas they are an ancient fiction. It must be noted that Christianity is the major target of these sneers. For many, the very concept of religion is dubious for it smacks of its Christian sources (Bloch 2010: 161).

For those who hold these views, explaining religion and its persistence into the rationalist age appears a daunting challenge. The contrast with Girard could not be more dramatic. Christianity is for him the revelation of the mendacities of all previous religions – which, for that reason, he prefers to designate by the term used by nineteenth-century anthropology, "the sacred." In the terms of French historian Marcel Gauchet (1999), "Christianity is the religion of the end of religion." It is the source of modern rationalism (Weber 2001 [1904–1905]).

The most fundamental difference between those two views on religion is still to come. Cognitive anthropology and archaeology believe that religion is above all a system of ideas, beliefs, and concepts. On this view, two questions naturally arise. First, how can such evidently absurd ideas actually be conceived and maintained in a person's mind? Second, how can they then spread, like an epidemic, passing from the mind of one person to another? For the Durkheimian tradition to which Girard, at least on this score, belongs, religion is first and foremost an *activity* that is practiced collectively, in the company of others, and that it is in this active, social context that religious ideas are formed simultaneously in the mind of each person. For Dawkins (2006: 173–174), by contrast, ritual is the by-product of myth and something still more enigmatically ridiculous than myth itself. "Why do humans fast, kneel, genuflect, self-flagellate, nod maniacally towards a wall, crusade, or otherwise indulge in costly practices that can consume life and, in extreme cases, terminate it?" he asks, apparently sincerely – and pathetically, in view of his confessed incomprehension.

Already in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912), Durkheim had identified what he took to be the same misapprehension:

> Most often, the theorists who have endeavoured to express religion in rational terms have seen it, above all, as a system of ideas that correspond to a definite object. This object has been conceived in different ways: nature, the infinite, the unknowable, the ideal, and so on. But these differences are unimportant. In all cases, it was ideas and beliefs that were considered the essential element of religion. As for rites, they seem from this point of view to be merely an external, contingent, and material expression of these inner states that were singled out as [the only ones] having intrinsic value. This conception is so widespread that, for the most part, debates about religion revolve around the question of knowing whether it can be reconciled with science or not, that is, if there is a place next to scientific knowledge for another form of thought that would be specifically religious.
>
> (Durkheim 2001 [1912]: 311)

For something like the sacred to have a chance to emerge, the proper setting is a "group in effervescence." Durkheim wasn't bold enough to imagine like Girard that this kind of group had to be a mob on the rampage and the collective killing of a surrogate victim, followed by its ritual repetition in the form of a sacrifice, but one cannot help but be impressed by the force of conviction one finds in a passage such as the following:

> A philosophy can indeed be elaborated in the silence of inner meditation, but not a faith. For faith is above all warmth, life, enthusiasm, the exaltation of all mental activity, the transport of the individual beyond himself. Now, without leaving the self, how could one add to the energies he has? How could he surpass himself with his forces alone? The only source of heat where we might warm ourselves morally is that formed by the society of our peers; the only moral forces with which we might sustain and increase our own are those [lent to us by] others … [B]eliefs work only when they are shared. One can certainly maintain them for a time through wholly personal effort; but they are neither born nor acquired in this way. It is even doubtful that they can be preserved under these conditions. In fact, the man who has real faith has an irrepressible need to spread it; to do this, he leaves his isolation, approaches others, and seeks to convince them, and it is the ardour of their convictions that sustains his own. His faith would quickly [wilt] if it remained alone.
>
> (Durkheim 2001: 320)

In the light of this remarkable passage, it becomes clear that the laboratory experiments conducted by cognitivist researchers to make religious beliefs grow in the mind of an isolated individual have as much chance of succeeding as the attempt to make roses grow on Mars.

The main problem with the notion of a "cognitive archaeology of religion" is the word "cognitive" in it. A number of issues raised by the scholars who work in its frame vanish into thin air if we rid them of all the weight of individualism and rationalism that characterizes cognitive science in general. Group psychology rather than economics would be a much better model. (Interestingly enough, the Keynesian revolution was so important because it made that move (Dupuy 2014).) The size of a human group seems to be a crucial parameter for archaeologists (see Chapter 5 this volume). Beyond a certain number, dubbed "Dunbar's number," living together in a peaceful and harmonious way would become a challenge according to them. One could say in reverse that below a certain number, probably much larger than Dunbar's, the sacred would never have emerged. Dunbar (2003) has computed the number of "levels of intentionality" necessary for a human mind to come up with the idea of a supernatural being. There are as many levels as verbs of propositional attitudes in the sentence: "I have to *believe* that you *suppose* that there are

supernatural beings who can be made to *understand* that you and I *desire* that things should happen in a particular way" (Dunbar 2003: 177). These four levels would be the critical threshold below which no "doctrinal religions" – that is, in Dunbar's terms (2013: 26), "associated with high gods – gods that can observe what mere mortals cannot and, more importantly perhaps, impose punitive sanctions on those who fail to toe the line" – could exist. This leads him to surmise that religion "was lacking in *H. erectus* and probably came into being only with the appearance of the earliest populations of archaic *H. sapiens*" (Dunbar 2003: 179). In a Girardian perspective, this cognitive performance is completely irrelevant since it is as easy and restful for the mind to take part in a ritual as it is to learn how to dance or to make love: you just let yourself go, following the lead of your partner(s). Blaise Pascal famously suggested that the best way to come to believe is to keep repeating the gestures of the cult.

Emergence of Cooperation

Cognitive archaeology is not only about cognition; it is also about evolution. Those two dimensions are actually closely intertwined, as they are in evolutionary theory in general.

Evolutionary theory has striven to reconcile the existence of altruism which seems to be a fact of nature with basic Darwinian principles that posit that animals behave in ways that increase their own chances of survival and reproduction, not those of others. Much work has been devoted over the past thirty years to trying to elucidate this apparent paradox (Sober and Wilson 1998; Wilson 2015).

Evolutionary biology has a peculiar definition of altruism that dispenses with any reference to intentions, since it purports to apply to all kinds of living organisms, including those (apparently) deprived of consciousness, like insects. An organism is said to behave altruistically when its behavior benefits other organisms even if that requires that it pay a price for it, by reducing the number of offspring that it will beget. For instance, in a number of species, an individual may warn its fellows of the presence of a predator at the personal cost of attracting attention to itself.

The key concept that allows the evolutionary paradigm to reconcile Darwin and altruism thus construed is the *level of selection*, i.e. the level at which natural selection acts. Darwin himself opened up that avenue in the case of humans. He saw at the same time that altruistic behavior, which he labeled self-sacrificial, was harmful at the level of the individual but that it could become beneficial at the level of the group:

> He who was ready to sacrifice his life, as many a savage has been, rather than betray his comrades, would often leave no offspring to inherit his noble nature … A tribe including many members who … were always ready to give aid to each other and sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over most other tribes; *and this would be natural selection.*
>
> (Darwin 1871: 163, 166; my italics)

A great number of concepts and mathematical models have been mobilized to account for this very broad notion of "tribe-selection," each one eliciting vigorous debates. Among them, game-theoretical models and in particular the prisoner's dilemma have played an essential role. A good number of works in cognitive archaeology have apparently been influenced by them. In game theory the concepts of cooperation and defection have a very specialized, technical meaning. A number of archaeologists have adopted them while giving them a much wider and fuzzier construal (Apicella et al., 2012). Defection, the logical opposite of cooperation, tends to mean, or to lead to, mistrust, free-riding, reduction of reciprocity, fear, and finally aggression and violence (Benz and Bauer 2013: 13). The conditions for cooperation to be possible are therefore those that mitigate violence.

It all started with the publication of political philosopher Robert Axelrod's book *The Evolution of Cooperation* (1984). The main conclusion of the book was based on the properties of the iterated prisoner's dilemma that the author had just started to explore. The prisoner's dilemma (PD) is the archetypal model of individualist methodology for social sciences as it represents individual agents as being in a situation in which their interests are at the same time converging and conflicting. Two players, Ego and Alter, each have the choice between two strategies: cooperating (C) or defecting (D). There are four possible cases, each of which gives the two players a certain payoff. It so happens that, although both players prefer mutual cooperation, everyone is led to defect, since it is in their self-interest to defect whatever the other player does (the concept of dominant strategy). Their being rational leads them to punish each other and themselves (Axelrod 2006 [1984]).

The central concept of game theory is the concept of Nash equilibrium. A Nash equilibrium is a state in which, *given what the other player does*, each player could not get better off by playing otherwise. In the prisoner's dilemma, given that each player has a dominant strategy, namely defect, it is straightforward that universal defection is a Nash equilibrium and the only one. However, if one allows the game to be repeated, this conclusion is no longer inevitable (Dupuy 1989).

New concepts have to be introduced, starting with the definition of strategy. For each player, strategy becomes a sequence of choices at every point in time as a function of the opponent's previous choices. Nash equilibrium has to be replaced by the concept of evolutionarily stable strategy (ESS), introduced by John Maynard Smith (1982) and used by Richard Dawkins in his celebrated account of biological evolution (1976). An ESS is a strategy which, if adopted by a population in a given environment, cannot be invaded by any alternative strategy that is initially rare.

In the case of the iterated prisoner's dilemma, three simple strategies are *Always Defect*, *Always Cooperate*, and *Tit-for-Tat*. The first two strategies do the same thing regardless of the other player's actions, while the latter responds on the next round by doing what was done to it on the previous round – it responds to *Cooperate* with *Cooperate* and to *Defect* with *Defect*.

It has been shown that *Tit-for-Tat* is an ESS with respect to an *Always Defect* mutant. It must be noted that a population of *Tit-for-Tat* players always cooperates since no one is ever the first to defect. Populations of *Always Cooperate* and *Tit-for-Tat* can therefore coexist. However, if there is a small percentage of the population that is *Always Defect*, the selective pressure is against *Always Cooperate*, and in favor of *Tit-for-Tat*.

There is therefore a robustness of *Tit-for-Tat* that gives it an evolutionary advantage. Hence the natural emergence of cooperation since cooperation is the behavior supported by the *Tit-for-Tat* strategy (Sober and Wilson 1998; Wilson 2015).

These ideas have gained much clout in economics, anthropology, evolutionary psychology, behavioral ecology, philosophy, political science, and even computer science. Let's apply them to the notion of kin selection. Suppose there is a gene of altruism and that altruists are more prone to share food with their relatives, who share the same gene, and that the selfish organisms keep the food for themselves. This can be easily modeled as a prisoner's dilemma, where cooperation and defection are respectively the strategies of the altruists and the egoists. Given that *both* payoffs are higher in mutual cooperation than in mutual defection, one can immediately see that selection will favor the altruists and the gene they bear provided that the probability of their sharing food with other altruists is sufficiently high. This is the exact reasoning that has been applied by a number of cognitive archaeologists (Apicella et al. 2012) to show that social networks that tie cooperators preferentially to other cooperators, leaving defectors no choice other than forming ties with kindred defectors, have a higher chance of leading to generalized cooperative

behavior. Their conclusion is that large-scale cooperation in humans that we observe today may have been facilitated by the coevolution of cooperative behavior with the kind of social networks that make it possible.

The prisoner's dilemma plays in all those reasonings the role played by the state of nature in classical and modern political philosophy, where it is taken to formalize Hobbes's conception of the human condition before the formation of the state. But no reason is put forward to justify this particular choice. It would make much more sense to resort to a different game, which has been taken to formalize what Rousseau called "natural society", that is, the kind of society that emerges spontaneously in the absence of a "social compact." In the modern transcription, this game, labeled the Stag Hunt (ST), has it that either men coordinate their efforts so as to hunt stags (C for cooperation), or they hunt rabbits individually (D for defection). Anyone who tries to hunt stags all alone will starve. Contrary to the PD, the good state (C, C) is here a Nash equilibrium, which gives it a priori some stability. However, it is easy to convince oneself that this stability is illusory as it is undermined by the inevitable workings of doubt and mistrust. To allow myself to cooperate, I must put beyond doubt not only that you will indeed choose to cooperate, but also that you have no doubt about the fact that I will cooperate, etc. The required number of "levels of intentionality," to use Dunbar's phrase, is actually infinite, which goes way beyond the capacity of any single mind (Dupuy 1989).

Rousseau's solution to this challenge is no less radical than Hobbes's: it consists in a political lobotomy that will transform every individual into a citizen, that is to say, someone who looks upward in the direction of the body politic while avoiding to look sideways and enter into the others' minds. Rousseau called "amour-propre" those sideways glances, a phrase which can be translated as envy, jealousy, and impotent hatred or resentment. It would seem that his remedy requires just one level of intentionality, but this is an illusion. The intended solution works only if a transcendent level is available, that of the state, which represents a formidable presupposition. At the end of his life Rousseau admitted that his political philosophy had come to a failure as he considered the production of this transcendence from within the society an impossible task, which he compared to the squaring of the circle.

Cognitive archaeology confronts the same challenge and chooses a cheap way out, namely functionalism. In order to live peacefully humans need a transcendence? They will give it to themselves in the form of divinities. Final causes carry the day. The immense superiority of Girard's

anthropology is that it is able to generate the required exteriority through a purely causal mechanism of self-transcendence or social bootstrapping: the dynamics of collective victimage and the divinization of the surrogate victim (Girard 1977 [1972]).

Violence and the Sacred in the Near Eastern Neolithic: Cognitive Archaeology's Logical Argument

One of the best illustrations of the previous considerations is probably the way cognitive archaeology tackles the problem of the management of violence in a settled community such as Çatalhöyük and correlatively the genesis of the sacred. We'll take as our guide the special issue of *Neo-Lithics* devoted to *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (2/13) which responded to a previous issue dealing with *Conflict and Warfare in the Near-Eastern Neolithic* (1/10). What is highly significant is that the logical argument takes the form of an indefinite sequence of negations. It can be formalized as: Not (Not (Not …)) Getting rid of these embedded negations might be the best way to truth. What follows is deliberately reduced to the bare bones, in order to better highlight the structure of the argument.

1 Human beings are social animals, prone to altruism and peaceful cooperation.
2 The transition to settlement raised a number of obstacles that prevented the spontaneous emergence of altruism and cooperation.
3 Although the early Neolithic communities were therefore potentially violent, it seems that *actually* they were *not* violent.
4 That is because they could avail themselves of *violence-mitigating mechanisms*. Those were mainly the constituents of the *symbolic world* and it is in that framework that divinities and religions were invented.
5 The symbolic world which supposedly is there to hold violence in check is itself violent. An essential bifurcation follows:
    5.1 The symbols are violent but this violence is purely "symbolic";
    5.2 Symbolic violence is not only symbolic in the sense that it stands for something else, being representational, but it is also *actually* violent! Good violence holds Bad violence in check.

I will comment in turn on these various points as well as on the transitions leading from the ones to the others.

> From 1 to 2 "Humans are endowed with a 'social brain'. They primarily aim at social community and cooperation," write Joachim Bauer and Marion Benz (2013: 65).

As we saw, this is very much in keeping with the postulates of biology of altruism which holds that we have natural instincts for cooperation and empathy as well as with the game-theoretical formalization of evolutionary theory, which concludes that "cooperation" is a spontaneous emergence. However, there comes immediately the negation operated by 2, which claims that the run up to Neolithization and the correlative transition to settlement raised a number of obstacles that prevented the spontaneous emergence of altruism and cooperation.

On the nature of those obstacles there seems to be a wide consensus. Bauer and Benz (2013: 65) write: "the transition to a new sedentary lifestyle, with herding and cultivation, proved to be a fundamental challenge … these challenges were caused by social and cognitive stressors. These stressors were the consequence of a regional increase in population density that, in turn, had possibly caused resource shortages."

When the size of the group exceeds the Dunbar number – defined as "the number of individuals who are willing to act as allies during conflict" or, for humans, "the number of people of whom one feels one can ask a favor and expect to have it granted" (Dunbar 2003: 170, 172), a number that is estimated at about 150 – the larger the group the more potent the following chain of consequences: Daily face to face interactions with people who do not belong to our core community become less frequent ➔ Social control diminishes ➔ Sharing of resources is undermined ➔ Free-riding incidents increase ➔ Confidence in others is reduced ➔ Mistrust fosters the projection of the cause of disease and other misfortunes on to other persons ("evil eye") ➔ The final outcome is increase in fear, aggression, and occasions of violence (Benz and Bauer 2013: 13).

For his part, Trevor Watkins (2013b: 7) evokes "the demands of greater cooperation and trust among people who do not know each other well, and the increased risks of cheats and free-riders."

The systematic reference to free-riding is significant. The background model remains the prisoner's dilemma. There is no free-riding problem in the Stag Hunt structure: those who shun cooperation do it, not because they are tempted to abuse the cooperators, but because they want to hedge themselves against the defectors: they play prudence, not temptation (Dupuy 1989).

There is something strange in this conviction that free-riding will become more prevalent as the size of the group augments. In a number of scientific disciplines, from economics to statistical physics, large numbers entail in general simpler and more stable equilibria. The theory of duopoles is very complicated since each of the two firms has a large number of strategies to choose from. By contrast, an ideal market in which every agent is too small to have an impact on the whole reaches very easily, in principle, an equilibrium. However, it is achieved thanks to the emergence of a self-transcendent level: the prices. Every agent takes the prices as given, although they all know that the prices result from their actions. There is no free-riding in such a market.

Once again we come across the idea that large numbers are not a problem provided that a transcendent level exists. At the same time it seems that those same large numbers facilitate the emergence of such a level. We already know that Girard's theory rests on these intuitions.

Another illustration is provided by Watkins's observation (2013b: 7) that

> Living together in the cognitive-cultural niche of a permanently settled community of several hundred other individuals required of everyone a very high degree of commitment to cooperation and altruistic behaviour. And at the same time everyone was required to accept on trust that all the others in the community to whom they were not related, did not know as neighbours, and did not work with day by day, were equally committed to cooperation and altruism for the good of the community.

It is easy to show that in an individualistic methodological framework this first-degree condition is far from being enough. If P is the proposition that everyone in the community is equally committed to cooperation and altruism for the good of the community, then it is not sufficient that everyone accepts on trust that P is the case. P must be "common knowledge," that is, everyone must know that P, everyone must know that everyone knows that P, ad infinitum. This condition, given the limitations of the human mind, can only be satisfied through the mediation of a meta-level, generated by a mechanism of self-transcendence, everyone trusting a common emergent entity, be it the future, the community as a body politic, or a pantheon of divinities.

3 The early Neolithic communities were therefore potentially violent.

However, it seems that actually they were *not* violent. Lee Clare et al. (Chapter 5 this volume; see also Chapter 4) write: "there is presently no conclusive evidence for intergroup fighting in the early Pre-Pottery Neolithic." They point to:

the conspicuous lack of archaeological evidence for intra- and intergroup violence at PPN sites, a finding that has meanwhile found confirmation in analyses of human skeletal material from Turkish sites … the PPNA has so far yielded little more than paltry evidence for war … This apparent absence of between-group violence in the Early Holocene also contradicts numerous studies to have highlighted the significant levels of aggression (and sometimes unrestrained violence) that can be encountered in "traditional" forager, hunter-gatherer, and horticulturalist societies, frequently consulted and used as analogies in prehistoric case studies.

On the other hand, the same authors acknowledge that

although archaeological evidence for armed combat between rival communities is absent, there is little doubt that interpersonal violence within communities did exist. Although the reasons for this internal bloodshed remain a matter of speculation, such disputes among complex hunter-gatherers could have arisen due to socio-political rivalry, matters of prestige and honour, and feuding.

These "sad" (Spinoza) or "disruptive" (Rawls) passions resonate with what Rousseau called "amour-propre" and Girard "mimetic desire." They suggest a formalization in terms of the Stag Hunt, which renders the concern with the others' thoughts and actions obsessional, rather than the Prisoner's Dilemma, which makes those thoughts and actions irrelevant, since everyone has a dominant strategy, non-cooperation, which by definition is independent of them. We already know that escaping the trap laid by the Stag Hunt structure requires the existence of a self-transcendent level.

4 If those potentially violent communities were actually not violent, it is because they could avail themselves of violence-mitigating mechanisms. Those were mainly the constituents of the symbolic world and it is in that framework that divinities and religions were invented.

About Çatalhöyük, Ian Hodder (2010: 343) writes:

there is much evidence coming out of the human remains laboratory that the people at Çatalhöyük lived nonviolent lives. There were few indications of the cuts, wounds, parry fractures and crushed skulls that are so common on many other sites. So how had the potential for violence been so well managed at Çatalhöyük?

And he answers (2010: 343, 349):

Social violence was dealt with by living within a symbolic, transcendent world of violence in which conflicts were resolved and social structures made permanent …

Through violent imagery and practice the person was drawn into a social world in which long-term transcendent social institutions were increasingly prevalent.

The next questions are obviously: where do the symbols and this alleged "transcendence" come from? And how do they function in their role of containment of violence? Those two sets of questions are intimately related because the account here is of the functionalist kind, this functionalism being implied by the evolutionary paradigm: if a feature of a domain is not functional, evolution eliminates it. If a community hadn't endowed itself with symbols, violence would have wiped it out ruthlessly.

At this point, the influence of Pascal Boyer's cognitive anthropology of religion on cognitive archaeology is crucial and pervasive (Boyer 2001). In his account, religion is a by-product of morality, a morality rendered necessary by the "free-riding problem."

The most important and original feature of Boyer's approach is that he takes issue with the customary view that morality depends on religion. "Religion," he says, "does not really ground morality, it is people's moral intuitions that make religion plausible" (Boyer 2001: 170). Relying on a large body of research conducted throughout the world that explores the neurophysiological substrate of morality and, as we saw, the emergence of cooperative behaviors in evolutionary models, Boyer has scarcely any need of religion in order to naturalize morality. Instead he chooses to take the opposite approach: since creating a physiological basis for religion presents a more formidable obstacle, he looks to naturalize morality first and then to apply this result in naturalizing religion. The formation of a moral sense was selected by evolution and incorporated in human minds in the form of a specific capacity for moral reasoning. The question is therefore how religious concepts come to be, in Boyer's phrase, "parasitic upon" moral intuitions (Boyer 2001, 191).

In keeping with the modular theory of the mind, morality has been selected by evolution in the form of cognitive modules that lead us to develop special relationships with our relatives, to exchange gifts, to feel empathy for others, and so on. Unrelated modules have passed through the filter of selection as well, for example our very great capacity for detecting intentional agents in certain threatening environments – a vestige of our ancestral past as hunters, when it was essential to be able to spot prey and predators in a forest. The key to the explanation Boyer advances is found in the following claim: "Moral intuitions suggest that if you could see the whole of a situation without any distortion you would immediately grasp whether it was wrong or right. Religious concepts are

just concepts of persons with an immediate perspective on the whole of a situation" (Boyer 2001, 190).

Our system for detecting intentional agents is so hypersensitive that it is apt to malfunction and invent such agents for us, even when there are none – and particularly when we violate a taboo. As supernatural agents, they have the singular property of possessing every piece of strategic information about our doings. Not that they know everything about us, for this would include a great many things that are not relevant; they are interested only in our moral choices and, most especially, our transgressions. "If you have a concept of [an] agent [as someone having] all the [relevant] strategic information," Boyer says, "then it is quite logical to think of your own moral intuitions as identical to that particular agent's view of the situation" (Boyer 2001, 190).

In other words, Boyer denies that the religious person begins by positing the existence of supernatural beings with absurd and inconceivable properties, and then proceeds to act morally, feeling himself to be watched. The truth of the matter, Boyer says, is opposite: the moral intuitions of ordinary – not necessarily religious – people lead them astray, so that they come to feel that they are interacting with supernatural agents, or else being spied upon by beings with special powers, which in turn gives rise to the belief that these agents exist.

The following quote by Dunbar (2013) about post-Neolithic settlement societies leaves no doubt about his source of inspiration. He refers to

> what, to me at least, is perhaps the one other glaringly obvious feature of post-Neolithic settlement societies: formal (or doctrinal) religions associated with evidence for special places of communal worship and/or formal priesthoods. Religions of this kind are invariably associated with high gods (*gods that can observe what mere mortals cannot and, more importantly perhaps, impose punitive sanctions on those who fail to toe the line*) … Unlike the shamanistic religions of forager societies, doctrinal religions (as their name implies) require symbolic representations *to communicate what amounts to a theology so as to be able to justify their "moral" line* … Doctrinal religions are the solution and they achieve this by shifting the solution from an endogenous, bottom-up, endorphin-based mechanism to *an externalised, top-down, punishment-based one* (without necessarily foregoing the endogenous mechanism, which still continues to play a role).
>
> (Dunbar 2013: 26, my italics)

This insistence on transgression or "failing to toe the line" raises a fundamental issue. Since they do not notice the preponderant place of ritual in religion, cognitivists remain unaware of the essential tension between ritual and the system of prohibitions and obligations that

regulate everyday life in a society regulated by a doctrinal religion. This conflict – whose existence forcibly struck Hegel, among others – arises from the fact that ritual frequently works to portray the violation of these prohibitions and obligations, within the clearly delimited space and time of a sacred festival. Dawkins and Boyer almost never use the words "prohibition" or "taboo." And why should they – since for them religion is merely a collection of ideas, beliefs, and concepts?

Consider a rite of enthronement, marriage, passage, or the like, where a sacred boundary is transgressed in the presence of the celebrants (incest, for example, or murder, or the eating of impure foods). One would like to know what the supernatural beings themselves think about this transgression – which, according to Boyer, causes them to intercede. Are they capable of seeing that it is also, within the time and space proper to the rite, an obligation? What sense do they make of the violence inherent in the ritualistic violation of moral injunctions? One thinks in this connection of Durkheim, who took issue with the tendency among anthropologists of his day, as he put it, "to characterize the mentality of lower societies by a kind of unilateral and exclusive penchant for refusing to make distinctions. If the primitive mingles things we keep distinct, conversely, he keeps apart things we yoke together, and he even conceives of these distinctions as violent and clear-cut oppositions." These include a stark contrast between sacred and profane things, which "repel and contradict each other with such force that the mind refuses to think of them at the same time. They exclude one another from consciousness" (Durkheim 2001 [1912]: 182). For cognitivists, who ignore both the central role of ritual and the clear-cut opposition between ritual and prohibitions, such questions have no meaning. By contrast, one of the chief virtues of the anthropology of violence and the sacred elaborated by René Girard is that it illuminates in a very simple and elegant way the radical separation between the prohibitions of ordinary life and the acting out of their violation within the framework of ritual (see Anspach, Chapter 6 this volume).

As for Çatalhöyük, Trevor Watkins (2013a: 62) writes, commenting approvingly on Dunbar:

> By implication, the question is, in which camp do we place our early Neolithic societies: do the extraordinarily elaborate symbolic representations of the earliest Neolithic of northern Mesopotamia and the Levant indicate the emergence of a novel kind of religious belief and practice, the transition to a doctrinal religious form?

This question is an excellent transition to our last item, the violence of the sacred.

5 The symbolic world which supposedly is there to hold violence in check is itself violent.

This is the ultimate negation, which crowns the logical argument with a nagging paradox. It is as if symbolic violence was able to *contain* actual violence.

Facing this critical challenge, two attitudes exist in the archeological literature.

5.1 By far the most common, the first attitude consists in saying: *the symbols are violent but this violence is purely "symbolic"* – in the sense that it remains confined to the world of representations (graphic, ritualistic, etc.). However, this symbolic violence had a function: to show the power of a community and, within that community, the power of some dominant agents.

Thus Benz and Bauer (2013: 17; my italics):

> The megalithic monuments at the hill-top sites in south-eastern Anatolia … established rituals in certain extraordinary landscapes or in special positions on the edge of the villages … The technological skill and expenditure of energy required for the erection of these buildings unambiguously *expressed the power* of these communities. By extracting the large stones, engraving this hard material, and raising the pillars, the community *demonstrated its power*.
>
> The act of erecting itself has a high symbolic meaning and *expresses self-confidence* … The hilltop monuments are solidified communal work that strengthens the corporate identity and *demonstrates its power* to others.

The reader is struck by this repeated insistence on the notion of power, as if it were the central category. However, next comes the moment when it is applied to some individuals in particular:

> One of the most remarkable changes in the "revolution of symbols" is the aggressive attitude of some of the animals … In contrast to Palaeolithic art, their mere presence was obviously not considered sufficient to demonstrate these animals' strength and power: now their most threatening features were highlighted, especially bared teeth and horns. And deadly scorpions and snakes became ubiquitous motives …
>
> The prevalence of threatening animals was chosen to enhance the power and competence of dominant agents by publicly demonstrating a danger, which had to be overcome collectively (thus reinforcing cooperation and loyalty) and by the suggested "need" of potent agents as protectors (thus accepting hierarchies). The emphasis on male gender might be explained by a rise of competitive contexts,

in which male individuals react with increased testosterone levels and are more prone to dominant behaviour than women.

(Benz and Bauer 2013: 19)

Today's prophets of doom are likewise accused of serving the powers-that-be and their governing through fear. The authors note that "research in neuroscience has shown that … fear is unanimously accepted as genetically fixed and universal to all people" (Benz and Bauer : 18): there's nothing new under the sun.

Thus religion piggybacks on the need for morality and is reinforced and maintained by the lust for power of a number of shamans, clerics, priests, all males naturally: this is the old Voltairian story, the "complot des prêtres" (the priests' conspiracy).

5.2 Much more interesting is the attitude of the archeologists who have read Girard – a tiny minority it must be said! They have understood that symbolic violence is not only symbolic in the sense that it stands for something else, being representational, but that it is also *actually* violent!

In keeping with this notion, Lee Clare et al. (Chapter 5 this volume) write, in reference to Girard (and myself), "the sacred is identifiable with a 'good' form of institutionalised violence that holds in check 'bad' anarchic violence" (Girard 1977 [1972]; cf. Dupuy 2013: 15). It should be noted that this formulation retains a kind of dualism. It is no longer the dualism between violence and the religious symbols. It is the dualism between bad violence and the good violence of the sacred. We are still a long way from Girard's stroke of genius: the discovery that violence has the capacity to transcend itself and turn into the sacred. The sacred and violence are intimately connected according to the following formula: the sacred *contains* violence in the twofold sense of the verb "to contain": to have within oneself and to hold in check. Girard's anthropology is essentially monistic, which does not prevent it from being complex, in the technical sense of the term – a sense that we are now going to explicate.

Complexity and Self-Transcendence in Girard's Anthropology

Cognitive archaeology has obviously a strong aversion to the notion of transcendence, probably because of its aversion, inherited from cognitive anthropology, to religion. Its implicit ontology is desperately flat.

Maurice Bloch (2008), an anthropologist who has written extensively about archaeology, while taking exception to Boyer's evolutionary account, claims that "religion is nothing special," although he has honestly to admit that it is "central." The banality of religion as he sees it resonates with Hannah Arendt's conception of the banality of evil – which means not that evil is everywhere but that it has "no roots." Likewise religion for Bloch has neither roots nor transcendence: it is simply "transcendental." Social transcendence, for Durkheim, meant the absolute exteriority and anteriority of society relative to its individual constituents. The "transcendental social," for Bloch, consists of a network of essentialized roles. My neighbor in the village is an old man, decrepit and blind, but he also plays the role of a transcendental elder. My actual, daily transactions with him are thereby very limited. At the same time he is in his essentialized role at the center of the village and respected by all. Relationships with and between such roles are highly simplified, since they bear on categories rather than biographies (Coward and Gamble 2008: 1975). The transcendental social thus defined and the religious are, for Bloch, "inseparable." If there is some measure of transcendence here, it is, say, that between Wales and Ebbw Vale, deriving from the fact that whoever Susan Jones is, it remains true that "Susan Jones lives in Ebbw Vale" implies "Susan Jones lives in Wales." It's difficult to imagine a flatter sort of transcendence.

Their specific notion of "social network" is another way for cognitive archaeologists to rid themselves of any measure of transcendence. In a social network thus construed, no difference is made between objects and persons: they "are not distinguished by some prior 'essence' but as a result of the web of relationships each is a part of" (Coward and Gamble 2008: 1972–1973). The authors go so far as to state that "people can be considered as a particular category of 'thing' with their own characteristic properties or affordances." That is more or less the definition of what goes today by the name of "flat ontology." The archaeologists prefer the notion of "material culture":

> One of the most striking features of human life is the extent to which we interact with entities other than our fellow humans, and one of the most lively debates in archaeology concerns the status of material culture – as object or as subject, passively imitated, used, traded, etc., or as playing an active, reflexive role in these practices.
>
> (Coward and Gamble 2008: 1974)

It's easy to understand why archaeologists should give material objects, from vases to megaliths, such an importance, since in the absence of

written documents or oral traditions, these are the only traces of the past at our disposal. However, it doesn't flow from that that all hierarchical distinctions should be abolished. Once again Durkheim had a much more interesting take on the subject:

> The fact that collective feelings are attached in this way to foreign things is not purely a matter of convention; it tangibly embodies a real feature of social phenomena, namely their transcendence of individual consciousness. Indeed, we know that social phenomena arise not in the individual but in the group. Whatever part we play in their creation, each of us receives them *from the outside*. When we imagine them as emanating from a material object, we are not entirely wrong about their nature. Although they do not come from the specific thing to which we attribute them, they do originate *outside us*. If the moral force that sustains the worshipper does not come from the idol he worships, from the emblem he venerates, it is none the less external to him and he feels this. *The objectivity of the symbol merely expresses this exteriority.*
>
> (Durkheim 2001 [1912]: 176, emphasis mine)

Objectivity suggests and implies transcendence. We are very far from the tenets of flat ontology.

As for gods and divinities, it looks as if cognitive archaeology gave them a purely functional role, a bit like money in neoclassical economics: they are there to fill a gap and to make the system work. Their place evokes what French structuralism in its heyday called "the lack in the structure." The spot is empty but it is ready to welcome whomever will occupy it. Again, all trace of actual transcendence is banished.

On the other hand, it is expected from a scientific, thereby secular, discipline that it remain wary of resorting to notions that smack of religiosity. However, there exists a genuine scientific paradigm that avoids this danger while it reveals itself capable of explaining how a system can generate an exteriority from within, via a kind of bootstrapping. Its key concept is self-transcendence (Dupuy 2014). Girard's anthropology illustrates beautifully the fecundity of this paradigm.

When archaeology decided to turn cognitive it naturally went to the dominant paradigm in cognitive science, once called "High-Church Cognitivism." Retrospectively, it looks as if that was the wrong move. Issuing like cognitivism from the cybernetics of the 1950s, this alternative paradigm studies the properties of complex self-organizing systems. Beside self-transcendence some of its most important concepts are complexity, path-dependency, tangled hierarchy, and endogenous fixed point (Dupuy 2009).

It was in 1948, during a symposium organized by the Hixon Foundation at the California Institute of Technology, which appears in

retrospect as one of the seminal moments of cognitive science, that the great mathematician John von Neumann, the inventor of the mathematical theory of automata, launched the notion of complexity into the scientific arena. Given a simple machine, it is simpler to describe what it is capable of doing than to describe the machine itself. Beyond a certain critical threshold of complexity, however, the opposite should be true: it should be simpler, infinitely simpler even, to conceive the machine than to describe completely its behavior. Von Neumann based his conjecture on the case of the recursive machine capable of producing an ensemble that is non-recursive and thus infinitely more complex than the machine is. What a complex object is capable of is (infinitely) more complex than the object itself. The matrix is (infinitely) transcended by its progeny. Or again: the simplest model of a complex object is the object itself. To be complex is to be capable of complexification. That is how von Neumann resolved the quasi-theological paradox of a human conceiving an automaton. The automaton being, by definition, complex, the creature escapes the creator.

Von Neumann's conjecture has important implications in philosophy of science with regard to the question of reductionism. It renders non-contradictory, for example, the following two assertions: (1) physico-chemical mechanisms are capable of producing life; (2) life is (infinitely) more complex than the physico-chemical mechanisms that generated it. It is coherent to embrace an ontology that is at once non-substantialist (non-vitalist) *and* non-reductionist. This is a remarkable conclusion when one realizes that non-reductionist ontologies are generally substantialist and non-substantialist ontologies nearly always reductionist (Dupuy 2009).

It was social philosopher Friedrich Hayek, incidentally a Nobel laureate in economics, who first conceived of society as a complex automaton, in the sense of this conjecture. The two assertions – (1) society results from the action of the people who compose it; (2) society escapes them because it is (infinitely) more complex than they are – are not contradictory. One may, without incoherence, be non-reductionist without having to accept holism. If it is true that this is still a methodological individualism, it stands in contrast to what is habitually meant by that, precisely through its refusal of reductionism. One may speak of a complex methodological individualism. It was also Hayek who introduced in the epistemology of the social sciences the concept of self-transcendence, also known as self-exteriorization.

Very early on the cyberneticians realized that imitation would be an excellent generator of self-transcendence. Imagine as an instance of

automata two absent-minded professors going together to attend the same event. Neither of them knows the venue; each one believes the other knows. A trajectory emerges, endowed with some stability, from the fact that each partner follows in the other's footsteps. The direction it points to is a pure creation as it was nowhere in the intentions of the subjects. On the contrary, as it emerges it becomes a guide for them. This is a perfect case of self-transcendence.

A very active branch of formal economics is today exploring the role of what it calls interpersonal influences in economic activity. Contrary to what one might have thought a priori, generalized imitation produces something rather than nothing. It creates self-reinforcing dynamics that converge so resolutely on their target that it is difficult to believe that this convergence is not the manifestation of an underlying necessity, in the manner of a mechanical or thermodynamic system returning invariably to its equilibrium state after straying from it under the effect of some perturbation. Yet one sees that the concept of equilibrium, which the theory of the market imported from rational mechanics, is absolutely unsuited to characterize the "attractors" of mimetic dynamics. Far from expressing an implicit order, they spring from the amplification of an initial disorder, and their appearance of pre-established harmony is a mere effect of unanimous polarization. They are condensations of order and disorder. The mimetic dynamic seems to be guided by an end that preexists it – and that is how it is experienced from the inside – but it is in reality the dynamic itself that brings forth its own end. Perfectly arbitrary and indeterminate a priori, it acquires a quality of self-evidence as the grip of collective opinion tightens.

In coming to an "equilibrium," the economists' ideal market is supposed to reflect an external reality. The prices express objective, "fundamental" values that synthesize information as diverse as the availability of techniques, the scarcity of resources, or the preferences of consumers. The mimetic dynamic for its part is completely closed upon itself. The attractors that it generates are not in any relationship of correspondence with an external reality, they simply reflect a condition of internal consistency: the correspondence between a priori beliefs and a posteriori results. The mimetic attractors are self-realizing representations. Generalized imitation has then the power to create worlds that are perfectly disconnected from reality: at once orderly, stable, and totally illusory. It is this "mythopoetic" capacity that makes it so fascinating.

Evolutionary theory has still a long way to go before it integrates those formal findings. The remarkable thing about Girard is that quite

independently of the movement of ideas that I have just described he was able to come up with the same schema of explanation in his own quest, the origin of the sacred and of human culture. The god-making machine runs on imitation. At the paroxysm of a crisis, when a murderous frenzy has shattered the system of differences that makes up the social order and sparked a war of all against all, the contagious character of the violence produces a catastrophic convergence of every enmity upon an arbitrary member of the collectivity. Putting him or her to death is what abruptly restores peace. The result is the sacred in its three component parts. First, ritual: always sacrificial at the outset, it begins by miming the violent decomposition of the group so that it may go on to stage the reestablishment of order through the killing of a surrogate victim. Second, the system of prohibitions and obligations, the finality of which is to prevent a new eruption of the conflicts that previously engulfed the community. Third, mythology: the interpretation of the founding event makes the victim out to be a supernatural being, capable at once of introducing disorder and of creating order.

If the "symbolic" level is violent, it is because it is generated by violence and its ability to transcend itself into the forms of the sacred. So far cognitive archaeology hasn't been able to grasp that point clearly. It sees that good (violence) stems bad (violence), but it doesn't see that at the same time it stems *from* it. Evil is not seen to contain itself through self-transcendence. In the biblical terms that Girard liked to use, "Satan casts out Satan" (Matthew 12:26). What makes one blind to this very special dialectic is the traditional pattern of Leibniz's *Theodicy* – the good contains the bad while being its opposite – a pattern that French anthropologist Louis Dumont called "the encompassing of the contrary" (Dumont 1980).

What this pattern obscures is that the two hierarchical levels are one and the same. This becomes apparent whenever a crisis erupts and the two levels coalesce into a "tangled hierarchy" (Hofstadter 1979). As we know very well, in the history of humankind many societies have perished in the twilight of their gods.

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PART IV

CONCLUSION

11

Religion as a Factor in the Development of Settled Life

Ian Hodder

This is the fourth edited volume to explore aspects of the role of religion at Çatalhöyük and in the Neolithic of Anatolia and the Middle East. All the volumes have resulted from bringing scholars in anthropology, religious studies and philosophy to Çatalhöyük over a number of visits in order to interact with the site and the archaeological team. These volumes have been cumulative and it is in the context of this series that the present volume takes its form. It is informative, then, to follow the ways in which the arguments have progressed. In particular, the previous volumes have exhibited a more diverse set of perspectives than the current focus on mimetic theory. So why has there been this shift to such a particular focus?

The first volume, *Religion in the Emergence of Civilization: Çatalhöyük as a Case Study* (Hodder 2010), dealt with some initial questions, particularly with regard to the issue of whether the term "religion" was itself applicable to the Neolithic. After all, the term is often used in the context of institutions that manage and control spiritual life, but at Çatalhöyük we have no evidence of a separate sphere of specialized activity that might be described by this term. It is clear that at Çatalhöyük spiritual life was embedded in all aspects of daily life, particularly those associated with the house, leading Bloch (2010) to argue that there is no religion at Çatalhöyük, only houses. The house came to be seen as enlivened or invigorated by bull's horns and other images of wild animals, as well as by the dead beneath the floors. Certain houses which had been rebuilt on the same footprint over many generations came to be called "history houses," places where memories and the dead were collected and passed down (Hodder 2016; Hodder and Pels 2010).

Another foundational question in the first volume concerned the question of how to describe "the religious" at all in contexts in which there were no identifiable religious institutions. The closest that the authors came to consensus on this issue was to relate "the religious" to "the beyond" – that is, with questions of transcendence and ultimate existence that extended beyond daily experience. There was also general agreement that "the religious" could not be confined to belief, but could be embedded within practice. But an important development was to recognize that modes of religiosity can vary and change through time. In particular, religion might be experienced as "imagistic" or "doctrinal," and at Çatalhöyük, evidence was found that suggested a shift from the former to the latter in the middle of the life of the tell or *höyük* (Whitehouse and Hodder 2010; see also Whitehouse et al. 2014).

The second volume, *Religion at Work in a Neolithic society: Vital Matters*, also published by Cambridge University Press (Hodder 2014), built on the first volume by exploring further the idea that houses and other materials at Çatalhöyük had vitality (Weismantel 2014). Here there were discussions of anthropomorphism and animism. "Bundles" of artifacts were interpreted in terms of their "magical" qualities (Nakamura and Pels 2014) and a burial of a mother and child was discussed in terms of the power of the conjoint components (Patton and Hager 2014). Buchli (2014) studied the ways in which surfaces in different material registers created relations between people. Overall, then, the focus was on vital materials, but there was also a return to questions of institutionalization. Mills (2014) used ethnographic parallels with pueblo societies in the American Southwest to show that secret societies, medicine societies, and other sodalities may have been anchored in the so-called "history houses" and that the latter were key to creating cross-cutting networks.

The stage was thus set to return in the third volume to the question of how memory and history were constructed through religious practices at Çatalhöyük. In *Religion, History and Place in the Origin of Settled Life* (Hodder 2018a), a broader survey of the evidence from the Middle East demonstrated that "history making" by building houses and burials on top of each other over time had existed well back in the Epipalaeolithic. At specific sites such as Aşıklı Höyük the evidence was even clearer than at Çatalhöyük (Duru 2018). From the Zagros to Göbekli Tepe to Körtik Tepe, there is clear evidence for constructing continuity through time in burial, houses, and "special" buildings (Benz et al. 2018; Clare et al. 2018; Matthews 2018). It is these links through time that were a major focus of religious practice, as might be expected as economies changed

from more immediate to more delayed return systems. In my view there is much less evidence that religious practices were primarily concerned with group solidarity and cohesion. In fact, the ceremonial buildings at sites such as Göbekli Tepe and Jerf el Ahmar could not have housed whole communities. They are more akin to men's houses, as argued by Flannery and Marcus (2013), and they may have been used by this and other subgroups and sodalities, creating differentiation rather than collectivity. What they more clearly do is establish transcendental relations through time.

So the cumulative discussions in the first three volumes had moved from general discussions of the nature of religion in early societies towards a more specific exploration of the nature of spiritual practice in houses, burials, and monuments. It had been established that religious practices were embedded in all practices of daily life in Neolithic sites in Anatolia and the Middle East, and that they were key to establishing continuities, but we still had no real understanding of how the religious practices functioned. One theme had been present throughout: all the evidence showed that there was an emphasis on "violence" in symbolism and practice, from wall paintings and reliefs to elaborate projectile points and blunt force impressions on human skulls. From the first volume onwards, there was questioning of this evidence. Bared teeth and fangs and claws might be seen as expressing positive power rather than violence. As discussed in Chapter 1 in this volume, we had largely interpreted this evidence in terms of Bloch's (2008, 2010) account of the transcendental social.

The way had thus been opened for the encounter with Girardian discussions of mimetic theory and the relationships between violence and the sacred. How exactly did apparently violent imagery at sites such as Göbekli and Çatalhöyük work? How did it produce sodalities and histories? Another challenge that remained was to integrate religion into a causal account of the origins of agriculture and sedentism in the Middle East. Much of our discussion in the first three volumes focused on the nature and interpretation of religion, but it did not try to show how religion itself was involved in the gradual shift to more intensive agricultural economies. Neolithic ritual and religion are normally explained by archaeologists in terms of creating social cohesion; in other words religion facilitated the process but did not have much to do with its cause. Cauvin (1994) did make claims for some causal role, although not entirely satisfactorily (Cauvin et al. 2001). Could one make the case that humans became entangled in religious practices in such a way that

religion contributed to the adoption of settled farming? Girard (1986 [1982]) had indeed argued that the sacrifice of cattle may have led to domestication. Could this claim be substantiated and built upon?

The challenges of these questions have been met in this volume by focusing on two themes in Parts II and III. In Part II the focus was on the scapegoating mechanism as engendering a society that can manage and control its violence through ritual and sacrifice. Skeletal data showed that, in comparison with many other prehistoric sites, there was little evidence of wounds that led to death, no signs of arrowheads or spearheads lodged in spines. On the other hand, there is evidence of blunt force trauma on skulls that suggests a managed or controlled violence. This evidence for the suppression of violence can be interpreted in terms of the wall paintings of wild bulls, and other wild animals, surrounded by humans in some form of ceremony. Thus violence against the wild bull "scapegoats" the all-against-all violence represented by pairs of opposing, and at times fighting, leopard reliefs (see Anspach, Chapter 6). In Part III the focus shifted to explore how contradictions within the mimetic process generated change. For example, in Chapter 7 Johnsen examined how the sacrifice of bulls as part of the scapegoating process became associated with the domestication of cattle that have then to be "made wild again" by teasing and baiting and perhaps by herd management. There was thus a dialectical process within the domestication of cattle, leading to change. Chantre in Chapter 8 focused on the interplays between sacrifice and sedentism as generating change, a back-and-forth between continuity and discontinuity, between interiority and physicality. In Chapter 9 Alison discussed the subversion from within of the scapegoat mechanism, and in Chapter 10 Dupuy discussed self-transcendence and the process whereby the good contains the bad while being its opposite. Dupuy's expression (in Chapter 10) that religion or ritual "contains" violence in a double sense is the most efficient: the violence of religion contains (controls) violence but it also contains the possibility of further violence.

Whether or not one calls these complex subversive or self-transcendent processes dialectical (see Chapters 1 and 10), there is wide agreement that the mimetic process as described by Girard is generative. This point was discussed in Chapter 1. The interplay between mimicry and rivalry, the interdependence between "bad" and "good" violence, the back and forth between the disordered violence of all against all and the ordered violence of all against one, generate change. But do they generate change that might lead to an intensification of human relations with plants and animals or to settled life? Here the problem is that Girardian theory does

not say much about material aspects of life. Indeed one reason to query the term dialectical in this context is that there is little that is very materialist in mimetic theory, little about the organization of labor and the sequences of production of material things and the control of resources. So what is the relationship between Girard's mimetic process and economic and material life?

Mimetic Theory and Things

The Girardian process certainly focuses attention on desire, including the desire for things, and the rivalry that results from that desire. But what of the things themselves? They seem to play little role in the account. I want to show how desire is entangled in the lives of things and then to argue that some of the problems of mimetic theory can be resolved by an understanding of human–thing entanglement.

There is a difference between wanting the same thing and wanting a similar thing. Both the British Museum and the Greek antiquities authorities want the same thing, the Elgin Marbles. Neither seems content to have a copy. But in many cases, copies suffice. Museums in Europe are filled with both originals and plaster copies of ancient statues. Rivalry can be resolved or diverted by mimicry that does not involve owning the same thing. Indeed mimicry is often the finest form of flattery or respect. Prestige can be gained by copying, and the person or thing copied may gain status in the process. In some cases a burden is then placed on high status individuals to stay ahead of the game and to generate new distinctive forms that can then in turn be copied in a process of emulation (Miller 1985). So, whether mimicry involves rivalry very much depends on context.

An important aspect of context concerns the manufacture and procurement of copies. So I may make a bronze statue, or sword, or clay pot, or house that is similar to other statues, swords, pots, or houses, but whether I can do so depends on material and social conditions. The mimesis of things often involves capturing the entanglements of things. If I want to ape a bronze sword exactly (and not make a copy in clay or wood, etc.), I need to have access to all the complex flows, chains, sequences of procurement of material, production, exchange, and consumption that are involved. So here mimesis, even when it does not involve obtaining the same thing but a copy of the thing, involves power and hence the potential for conflict and violence. All material things which might be desired are entangled in other things. So desire leads to entanglement and to conflict over one's place in chains of human–thing dependence.

In some societies, where complex operational sequences are rare and where materials are widely and easily available, there may be little basis for mimicry to lead to violence. Pinker (2011) has discussed the long-term evolution of violence. It remains difficult to demonstrate archaeologically that through time degrees of violence decreased or increased. Small-scale hunter-gatherer societies may have few material things over which to compete, but they may nevertheless engage in frequent fighting over women or land or spiritual threats (Kopenawa and Albert 2015). But as the amount of material stuff increased in early Neolithic farming societies, and as notions of property became more marked, the mimicry of material things and the control of access to resources may have led to the potential for increased rivalry. From the Girardian point of view, this may be why the "birth of the gods," in Cauvin's (1994) phrase, and sites such as Göbekli Tepe are associated with the start of farming and a settled way of life.

This is not to argue that hunter-gatherers do not mimic and there are certainly Palaeolithic contexts in which there is much evidence for prestige goods, widely traded goods, and rich burials (Wengrow and Graeber 2015). It is possible that hunting large wild animals can be seen as a form of scapegoating even in these early periods. Archaeologists influenced by human behavioral ecology have long discussed how large game animals provide the most valued meat source and diet-breadth models suggest that through time humans are forced to exploit small and faster game (Winterhalder 1986). The reason that large animals are preferred is often described in terms of the quantity of meat, and the difficulty of the hunt, but in fact distributing or conserving large amounts of meat suddenly available may be difficult, and human behavioral ecologists often refer to the social value of giving feasts and providing food to a community. But it is also possible that the reason large animals are highly valued may be, from a Girardian perspective, that they are seen as sacrificial victims that become sanctified because of their success in diverting attention from within-group rivalry. The sanctified nature of the large animals may then be celebrated in, for example, cave paintings in southwest France and Cantabria. Girard declares in *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*, "To understand what might have impelled humans to set off in pursuit of the largest most dangerous animals [and to create the type of organization that prehistoric hunting necessitated], it is necessary and sufficient to recognize that hunting, [too, is a sacrificial activity at first]" (Girard 1987 [1978], 73, sections in brackets translated by Mark Anspach).

But it is at fully developed farming sites such as Çatalhöyük that we would expect to see greater tensions between mimicry and rivalry as the amount of material stuff increased, forms of ownership increased, and chains of procurement and exchange lengthened. And it is also expected that scapegoating activities should increase and decrease through time at Çatalhöyük in tandem with economic and material changes. And indeed this is what we do see. Evidence of "classic" Çatalhöyük with all its symbolism, painting, reliefs, and burials is concentrated in the middle levels, around 6500 BCE. Through the rest of the sequence similar practices are evidenced but they reach their height in the middle levels. This is the time when there is greater evidence of work and disease stress on skeletal materials, when the size and density of the settlement are at their greatest, when fertility is at its highest, and when domestic cattle are introduced and there is an increased emphasis on sheep husbandry. It is thus of interest that this is the time when most burials occur in houses, when most bull installations are found, and there is most ritual burning of buildings.

It can certainly be argued that violence was managed at Çatalhöyük by strong taboos and prohibitions. In particular, all houses at the site were organized on a north–south axis, with hearth, oven, entry, "dirty" floors, and child burial in the south, and art, ritual, burial, and higher, whiter, and "clean" floors to the north. There were many other rules: whole pots were never placed in graves with humans, and neither were animals. Obsidian hoards occurred in the southern part of houses; burial did not occur outside houses except in special circumstances. And so on. The movements and practices of people in houses were carefully regulated and repeated. These rules and prohibitions do, according to the Girardian scheme, provide one mechanism for dealing with violence. But the question remains of why people followed the rules so assiduously. Çatalhöyük is one of the biggest Neolithic sites in the Middle East, and it is also one of the most elaborate symbolically. These two facts are probably related. The strong symbolic repertoire functioned to sanctify and give ultimate meaning to the practical rules. One way in which this sanctification happened according to the Girardian view is through the scapegoating mechanism. Wild bulls and other wild animals transformed all-against-all violence into the "good" violence of all against one. The beasts that achieved this feat became sanctified and were integrated into the fabric of the house, thus giving authority to the internal rules of practice, the rules, and prohibitions. But the degree of ritualization depended on the specific material conditions at any one moment in time. As already

noted, there is much evidence of pressures and strains in the middle levels of occupation, and thus it is not surprising that the amount of ritual and symbolism in houses increases in the middle levels.

So the main problem that I see with the Girardian approach when put in the context of long-term change is that there is insufficient attention paid to the material contexts in which there may be different degrees and forms of mimetic rivalry, and thus it becomes difficult to explain variation through time. I have argued here that by linking Girardian theory to theories about human–thing entanglement, by exploring how the copying of a thing involves being drawn into the chains of dependencies of things, a fuller account can be provided. Although Girardian mimetic theory is undoubtedly generative, by linking it to the human–thing entanglement, a fuller account of social and economic change can be achieved.

If mimetic theory is generative, what is it about the generative process that leads to agriculture and settled life? I hope it has become clear that answering this question involves embedding the theory in specific sets of human–material relations. In the 10,000 years before the adoption of farming I have argued that a long slow process saw the gradual entangling of humans and things in domestic contexts such that humans were drawn into closer and longer-term relationships with houses and the intensive processing of plants using grinding stones, sickles, and other equipment (Hodder 2018b). There was a cycle of dependence on things that led to greater sedentism and thus to greater dependence on things. This process was partly pushed along by its own internal logic, but early on we see the repetition of buildings in the same place, sometimes associated with burial. Ritual and memory making were thus involved and it is possible, given the accounts discussed in this book, to argue that they included generative and causal components.

Houses, the burial of the dead, and hunting as involving sacrifice may all have been involved in a generative process that was tightly linked to a specific set of human–material entanglements. The house became the place where hearths, grinding stones, and plants anchored the economic and social process. The vitality of the house was ensured by burying ancestors beneath the floors and by installing bull horns (e.g. at Hallan Çemi or Boncuklu). The house was where order and continuity were established, always threatened by breakouts of "bad" violence. Rituals that reasserted order through the performance of "good" violence were provided for by the economic practices of the house-based social units. Feasts and other ritual practices were sustained by the domestic production, thus adding to the spiral of yet closer relationships between humans, plants, animals,

and equipment. The interplay between "good" and "bad" violence, and between violence and the sacred, itself contributed to the emergence of settled farming life.

As another example, in Chapter 3 Palaver discusses how in many small-scale societies the death of individuals is seen as caused by malevolent acts. Rather than creating cohesion, death has the ability to lead to more death and violence. Burial rituals are seen as practical mechanisms to respond to the violence unleashed by death. By locating the dead and burial ritual in the house, the latter becomes sanctified as the place where violence is managed. And yet the location of burial within houses associates the dead with particular living groups and thus enhances the definition of identities and boundaries (rather than shared or external burial), and the separation between groups. Negative violence is thus managed and exacerbated at the same time. There is thus a potential for increased ritual investment, as indeed is found through the early and middle phases at Çatalhöyük. More generally, the gradual increase through the Late Pleistocene in the link between houses and burials may have resulted from the ways in which ancestral burial decreased within-group violence. But at the same time, between-group rivalry may have been increased in these same practices. There was thus a spiralling process that reinforced the stability and continuity of houses, and also promoted the economic practices that made that stability possible.

What is important here is that "religion" comes into its own as a factor that contributes to the development of settled life – the internal generative qualities as described by Girard could themselves be driving things forward. The dialectical processes within the scapegoating mechanism generate change, and in the particular context of the Epipalaeolithic and Neolithic of the Middle East, they contributed to increased sedentism, and closer relationships between humans, animals, and plants. Religion is given a dynamic central role, not as a response to the needs of community formation, but itself generating community, sedentism, and new forms of economic life.

Conclusion

Girard's mimetic theory offers much to archaeology, although this potential has been little realized (but see van der Leeuw 1990). The 2015 volume edited by Antonello and Gifford on *How We Became Human* deals with mimetic theory in relation to human evolution, but otherwise there has been little application. In this volume we have shown how the

theory helps to interpret the specific imagery identified at Neolithic sites such as Çatalhöyük and Göbekli Tepe; it helps to make sense of the focus on wild animals, their teasing, and killing, as well as the focus on phallic imagery. It helps to make sense of Palaeolithic burials and indeed of the way the dead are treated in many societies. It opens up a field of study in which real violent trauma and its prevalence in archaeological skeletal collections can be interpreted in terms of social and ritual practices. It provides an answer to the question of why violent imagery coincides so strongly with the first settled villages.

Perhaps more important, the approach offers a generative mechanism that does not reduce to climate change or population increase or resource stress. Rather, it promotes the notion that more complex and irreducible linkages between myth, ritual, violence, and social order can themselves generate change, and indeed underpin the processes of resource intensification that are normally seen by archaeologists as key factors. Over recent years it has become increasingly acceptable to refer to social and religious causative factors as involved in major changes such as the origins of farming, settled life, and urbanism. Girardian theories offer a specific set of hypotheses of how ritual may have played a causative role, especially with regard to the creation of social order as humans agglomerated and intensified. Such theories are eminently testable. As is shown in Chapter 4, it is possible to explore skeletal evidence for physical violence in relation to evidence for rituals and imagery involving sacrifice. The long-term sustainability of settled communities can be studied in terms of the ways that violence is managed in ritual and religion.

And yet doubts and criticisms remain about the general applicability of Girardian perspectives, especially with regard to long-term change. Girard's work is heavily steeped in the analysis of biblical texts, and might therefore be seen as of little relevance in anthropology and archaeology more generally. This issue is discussed most fully in this volume in Chapter 9 by Alison. But in this final chapter I have suggested that the potential of mimetic theory for understanding long-term human development and for comparative approaches can only be fully realized when the mimetic process is more adequately linked to varying material contexts. Humans mimic, certainly, but mimicry does not necessarily lead to rivalry. The world did not always have copyright laws! It is possible to copy without ensuing violence. Or to put it another way, copying is not an abstract informational process. It depends on the entanglements of things. The generative nature of mimesis, beyond the symbolic and ritual spheres, needs to be linked with the generative character of entanglement

theories. The workings of the mimetic process depend on other contextual factors such as the amounts and entanglements of material stuff and whether objects can be owned as property, or on modes of religiosity (such as the imagistic and doctrinal modes identified by Whitehouse). The encounter between mimetic theory and the Neolithic, a time of major economic change, has helped to point to the need to understand such contextual factors.

There is much evidence in this volume that Girardian perspectives open up interesting areas of research. They stimulate answers to long-debated questions as well as to specific interpretations of sites. While there remains much to be done in terms of critiquing, developing, applying, and testing mimetic theory, this volume has shown that by bringing two realms of endeavor together, Neolithic archaeology and Girardian theory, it is possible to open new lines of research, suggest new hypotheses, and envisage new tests and validations. Our purpose has been preliminary, but we believe the potential has been demonstrated.

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Index