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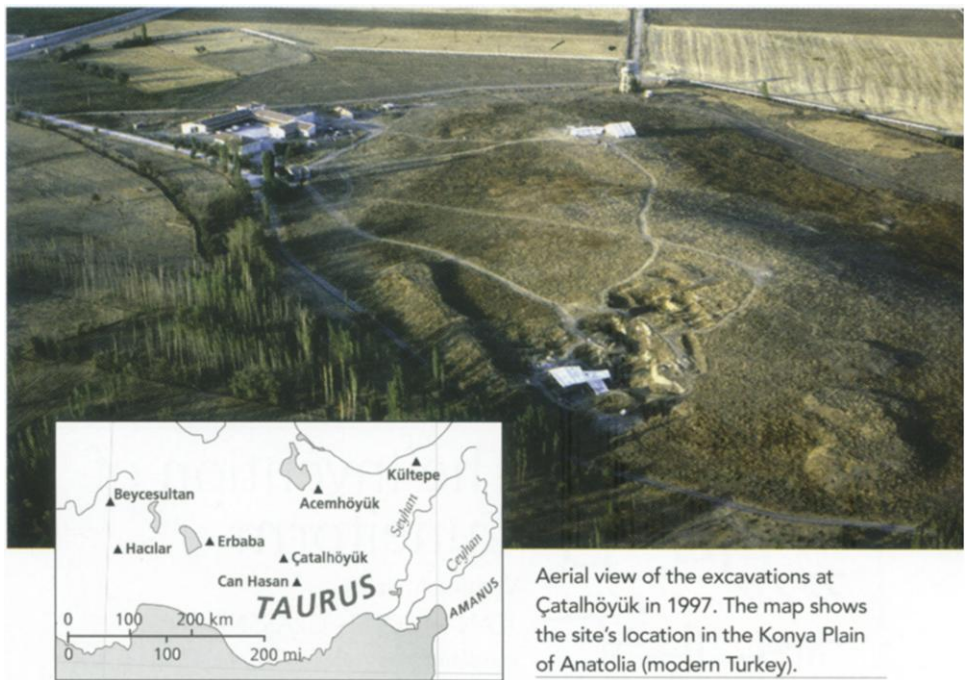
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# Ethics and Archaeology: The Attempt at Çatalhöyük

By Ian Hodder

How should archaeologists decide which questions to ask about the sites they are excavating? Normally, we consider questions that arise within the academy of scientists. In order to get research funding we ask questions that are topical and that are sanctioned by the scientific community. Or we may respond to the interests of donors while at the same time trying to retain academic integrity and independence. In all these ways, the agenda-setting process is top-down; it comes from the archaeologists themselves, perhaps in collaboration with their funders.<sup>1</sup>



Aerial view of the excavations at Çatalhöyük in 1997. The map shows the site's location in the Konya Plain of Anatolia (modern Turkey).

But in a globalized world, is this sufficient? Is it adequate to focus on the testing of hypotheses set by the academy—an academy always steeped in its own interests and directions? On most if not all archaeological sites there are multiple communities with an interest in the site. They are “stakeholders” such as local inhabitants, tourists, the media, politicians and so on. And there may be different interested communities with conflicting interests. Is it socially and ethically responsible to conduct archaeological research without taking account of the questions they might be interested in asking? The usual response to such concerns is to build a museum, or provide an exhibit in an information center. Local communities then have to accept or comment on what has been done by the archaeologists—their contribution is minimized. A fuller response is to engage the different stakeholder interests in the setting of agendas in the first place.

This article discusses some of the ways in which the archaeological research at Çatalhöyük responds to and integrates questions set by a variety of communities. In my view, to

understand what these communities are and to understand the questions they would most like to have answered, is a specialist area of research. For this reason, there are several ethnographers who work on the Çatalhöyük project, and who assist in the dialogue with different communities. This paper is, then, especially indebted to Ayfer Bartu, David Shankland and Nurcan Yalman, who have worked on the various communities discussed here. In more general terms, the ethical need for closer interaction between archaeologists and the communities they serve leads to a demand for closer collaboration between archaeologists and ethnographers. While there are many groups with some form of interest in Çatalhöyük, I intend to concentrate on four broad groupings: politicians, local residents, New Age Goddess followers and artists.

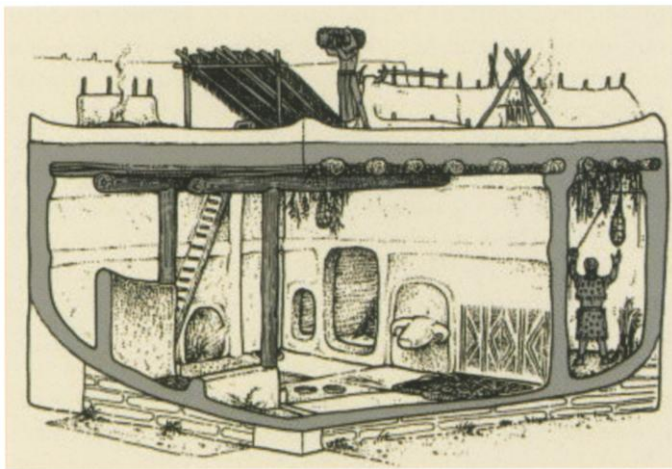
In discussing the way that research questions can be set within a collaboration and negotiation of interests, I do not mean to argue that the archaeologists themselves should have no questions of their own. Clearly they have a duty to respond to questions set by

“ Rather than imposing questions from outside, [archaeologists] also have a duty, in my view, to engage in research that seeks compromise and bridges between a variety of different interests. ”

the academy, and to act in accord with best disciplinary practice. But rather than imposing questions from outside, they also have a duty, in my view, to engage in research that seeks compromise and bridges between a variety of different interests. A post-colonial solution involves dialogue and hybridity rather than imperial imposition of outside agendas (Bhabha 1994; Appadurai 1996).

### Introduction to Çatalhöyük

Some of the reasons that Çatalhöyük is the focus of so much interest from diverse communities can be found in its history of discovery and research. It was first excavated by James Mellaart in the 1960s, and he successfully publicized its enormous importance (Mellaart 1967). At an early date, now known to be 7400 to 6200 BCE, its great size (13 hectares) is impressive, as are the sixteen or so levels of occupation in a twenty-one meter high mound. The site showed that large early sites existed outside the “Fertile Crescent” in the Near East. But it was especially the art that caught the scholarly and public interest. The wall paintings and relief sculpture were unique, and even today, after the discovery of parallel sites in southeastern Anatolia with elaborate art, it remains the densest concentration of symbolism so far found in the eastern Mediterranean at this time. Internationally, the site became widely known through Mellaart’s publications in the *Illustrated London*



A view into the interior of a house at Çatalhöyük, showing the unique art for which the site is famous. Note the activity on the roof.

*News* and elsewhere. Within Turkey the site took on a special significance as the origin of Anatolian civilization.

New research at the site under my direction began in 1993, after decades of inactivity. But it was clear from our earliest press days, that the site had not lost its hold on the public imagination, at least in Turkey. Our sponsors started organizing press days in order to attract publicity for their contributions, and frequently fifty or more press and media representatives turned up at the site, eager to get the latest news. Most of these have been national and local media, but we also get coverage from the international press and television.

### The Politicians

For the first group that has an interest in Çatalhöyük, this media interest is crucial. The politicians have come to show a special engagement with the site since, at press events, they are able to gain wide media coverage. Of course, they each have their different claims to make, but for all, the pay-off is publicity in the context of an international project working at one of the most important early sites in Turkey. I wish to limit this discussion to two contrasting groups of politicians—the local regional politicians and the European politicians. As we will see, they use the site in very different ways. To what extent can the archaeology engage in a dialogue with such political interests? To what extent can it respond to the questions the politicians raise?

Çatalhöyük is situated one hour east of Konya, in a region known for its religious fundamentalist and/or nationalist politics. In recent years the region has been the stronghold of the nationalist MHP party, and it is also a center for Islamic companies and traditional rural Islamic attitudes towards women regarding social and economic behavior. When politicians such as the local mayor (from Çumra, the local town), or governor, give talks in front of the press at the site, they talk about the importance of the locality and the region. They say that the presence of Çatalhöyük demonstrates the special nature of the region. Of course, they admit that the site is pre-Turk and pre-Islamic, but they nevertheless say that it shows the importance of the land and its traditions. They point also to the international character of the project and the visitors it attracts. Again this shows the importance of the region. Some try at times to make links to the migrations of the Turks themselves, but most are content with rather vaguer connections between past and present.

There is undoubtedly a political and local interest in the question “who were the people that lived at Çatalhöyük?” Local people ask us this question all the time. “Were they related to us?” To what extent can archaeologists respond to this question? One obvious contemporary method is through ancient DNA analysis (e.g., Jones 2001). The human burials discovered in the excavations at Çatalhöyük have been the subject of two ancient DNA projects. The first was undertaken by the Leeuwen laboratory in Belgium, and the second by Stanford University (Malhi et al. 2003). So far this work has only been able to suggest that there may be some ancient DNA present in the human bones. Much more and very intensive study will be needed before anything can be said about the similarities between the ancient and modern populations in central Turkey.

There clearly is considerable local interest in trying to understand the genetic links between Çatalhöyük and present-day populations, and so the project will continue to try to find ways of continuing this ancient DNA research. Another response would be to focus on historical studies which show how the local villages in the Çatalhöyük–Çumra area are made up of migrants from the Balkans, and such research is part of ethno-archaeological work being carried out by Nurcan Yalman. Yet another response is to show ways in which Çatalhöyük is part of a regional tradition. It has long been assumed that the agricultural revolution spread through Anatolia and Europe after originating in the Fertile Crescent. Contemporary versions of this view will be discussed below. But recent comparative research by Özdöğän (2002) has suggested the importance of regional continuities in central Anatolia. Certainly the evidence from Çatalhöyük shows connections across a wider zone reaching into the Levant and middle Mesopotamia. The use of lime plaster in the earliest levels is parallel to its use in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B in the Levant. The figure with upraised arms and legs is found at Göbekli and Köşk Höyük (Schmidt 2001; Öztan 2002). And of course more generic traits such as the bull heads and female figurines and burials beneath floors are widely found. Plastered skulls from Köşk Höyük recall those from the Levant (Öztan 2002). On the other hand, Özdöğän points to distinctly regional traits in central Anatolia such as the lack of centralized authority. There are undoubtedly distinctive characteristics of the Çatalhöyük evidence that suggest a local process of development, even if influenced by the Near East.

Such evidence says nothing, of course, about the continuity between the past and the present, but it reinforces the interests of local politicians in the distinctive contributions of their region. As archaeologists, we have to resist, however, those politicians that wish to take the evidence towards an extreme interpretation in terms of cultural or racial superiority. The archaeological and historical evidence indicates a long period of cultural mixing between local traditions and outside influence. Even the DNA evidence will not resolve the issues of “who we are,” since answers to that question are as much social, cultural and historical as they are genetic. The important point is that archaeologists are able to enter into a debate with local politicians about issues in which they show a prime concern.

From time to time, a very different type of politician visits Çatalhöyük. For example, the Ambassador of the European Union makes very different speeches when he speaks to the press at the site. His aim is to speak to those in Turkey who, in contrast to the nationalist politicians, wish to take Turkey into the European Union. The Ambassador talks of the fact that there was no boundary between Europe and Asia at the time of Çatalhöyük. He refers to the evidence we have discussed with him for cultural contacts between central Anatolia and southeastern Europe in the Neolithic. He is fascinated when we describe to him the work of Colin Renfrew (1987) on the spread of Indo-European languages and on the relationship between that language dispersal and the spread of farming from Anatolia into Europe. He takes this as proof of his view that “originally” Turkey

was part of Europe, and he seems less interested when we say that many archaeologists take the view that there are difficulties with the notion of a large-scale spread of Indo-Europeans associated with the spread of agriculture. We point out the evidence described above, for regional sequences, but he looks at the evidence through his own political lenses.

It does seem possible, then, to direct archaeological research so that it responds to issues raised by local politicians. Indeed, I would claim an ethical duty to respond not simply because of responsibility towards one’s hosts, but also because the politicians use the distant past to make claims about origins and identities. These claims need to be tempered by the archaeological evidence, or at least the archaeologist needs to provide the opportunity for competing points of view to be taken up. The site and the data that are made known by the archaeologist will be used in one way or another to support political claims—in my view it is unethical for the archaeologists to wash their hands of this process and to remain disengaged.

## The Local Communities

The Turkish men and women who work on the project come mainly from the local village of Kuçukköy (1 km from the site) and from the local town of Çumra (15 km from the site). They work in a variety of capacities from laborers to guards and guides to flotation assistants and heavy residue sorters. Increasingly the site has been visited by local people from other neighboring villages and towns and from the regional center at Konya. What types of questions are these stakeholders interested in, and how can we contribute to their interests in and understanding of the site?

Many of the local rural inhabitants are farmers with low incomes and limited education. Their knowledge about the site is obtained from primary school and from folk traditions. In general, they have little detailed knowledge of the history and prehistory of Turkey and the Konya region. Their interests in the site thus include more practical concerns, such as how to benefit economically from the project, the site and its tourists. Up to forty or fifty people are employed by the project for a few months every year. A villager from Kuçukköy has built a café and shop outside the entrance to the site, and the women from the village sell embroidered cloth at the dig house. The project has also contributed to the digging of a new well and the provision of a new water supply. The project has helped to persuade regional officials to build a new school in the village, and it has contributed a library to the village.

As already noted, finding out what the local communities want to know about the site is a specialized task and the ethnographers who work with us have been involved in various schemes to educate and engage the local communities in the site and the project. For example, Ayfer Bartu has given talks about the project in the village. She has also assisted the women from the village to set up a community exhibit in the Visitor Center at the dig house. In this exhibit, the women chose to concentrate on the plants that grow on the mound, which are important as herbs and medicines.

In 2001, a group of men and women from the village were asked to take part in our post-excavation studies. They were paid to contribute to discussions about the interpretation of the site,



Members of the local village community contributing to laboratory discussions about the interpretation of analytical results from Çatalhöyük.

based on the most recent analytical results that were explained to them. These discussions were put on video and their comments will be transcribed and used as verbatim quotes in the publication texts. The types of question to which they could most effectively contribute were those that related to the practices of living in the central Anatolian environment. Thus they were able to contribute to issues of how ovens of different shape and made of different clays could be used. They knew the effect of the dominant winds on the location of fireplaces in houses. They contributed to issues regarding the difficulties of life in the winter.

One question that most interested them was “why here?” They were particularly interested in why this particular bit of land was chosen for the site. They were interested in the specifics of the locality, and how it was used for agriculture and food. In fact, it has proved difficult to answer the question “why here?” Much work on establishing the landscape and palaeoenvironment has been done by a team led by Neil Roberts, based on the sedimentology and pollen of cores taken from around the site and in the region. It is clear that at the time of the site’s occupation there was severe seasonal flooding and wetlands in the vicinity of the site. This location is reflected in the number of water birds found at the site. It was therefore surprising to find that the cereal phytoliths being studied by Arlene Rosen indicated dry-land farming. The archaeobotanical team also found an association between cereals and dry-land weeds. At the time, the nearest dry land was 10–12 km away. Most data specialists agreed that the site would have been better located up the local river system towards higher and drier land. For example, a wetland is not an ideal environment for domestic sheep. Why was the site located where it was, in a wetland? One possible answer is that we have much evidence now that the plastering of houses and the use of mud for building at Çatalhöyük

“ It would be wrong to assume that the local communities are an “other” that is somehow closer to prehistory than “we” are. ”

were very elaborate. Particularly in the early levels we have evidence of considerable lime burning to make high quality lime floors, which were painted. The location of the site low down within the plain gives easy access to the wide range of lime-rich clays and marls needed for the plastering and sculpture within the buildings. These factors, as much as subsistence resources, may have determined the location of the site.

Much of the evidence that we have considered shows that, at least in the earlier levels of the site, the subsistence economy was diverse and small scale. There were domesticated cereals and sheep and goat, but these were only part of a patchwork of resources used, some obtained from great distances such as the hackberry. There is much evidence also that in the early levels these resources were largely collected within a domestic mode of production. Storage evidence is small-scale and within-house. There are only small containers (pots, baskets, wooden bowls) and small grinding stones. At least in the early levels these domestic units collected a wide range of resources over a complex seasonal round. There was undoubtedly cooperation at supra-house levels, but much of daily subsistence was carried out at a small-scale level.

We can, then, attempt to answer some of the local questions about the site. But it is also important not to promote the view that somehow the local communities are “lost in time,” leftovers from prehistory. It is not surprising, perhaps, that the local

community is most interested in locality and land use. But it would be wrong to assume that there is some continuous connection between past and present. Historically there has been much in and out migration. There has been massive social and cultural change over the last nine millennia. It would be wrong to assume that the local

communities are an “other” that is somehow closer to prehistory than “we” are (Fabian 1983). The local communities contribute to the project and ask questions of it that relate to their knowledge of the environment and its soils. They do not have some privileged knowledge based on cultural continuity. To claim that would be to “museumize” the local communities.

### The Goddess Communities

Another set of communities interested in the work of the project at the site is defined by an interest in the Goddess. Groups on Goddess tours regularly visit the site from the USA, Germany, Istanbul and elsewhere. They come to pray, hold circle dances, feel the power of the Goddess, and even eat the earth of the mound! There is a great diversity of such groups from Gaia groups, to Ecofeminists, to Goddess New Age travelers. Individuals are often visibly moved by the experience of visiting and it is undoubtedly the case that for many the existence of the Goddess at Çatalhöyük is important for their personal sense of identity. The project has

entered into dialogue with some members of the varied Goddess groups on its website, and some of the research directions being taken result from these interactions.

One specific offshoot of the interest in the site from women's movements was a fashion show staged in Istanbul by Bahar Korçan, a Turkish/international dress designer. She based an exhibition on the theme of Çatalhöyük and "women of other times." The clothes were inspired by the site, the cat-walk was "in" a model of Çatalhöyük, and slides of the site and its art were shown in the background as part of a multi-media experience. In fact, the show was a major press and TV event, with the top popular singer at the time, Tarkan, making an appearance. The press coverage extended globally to France, Japan and beyond.

The varied Goddess groups with an interest in Çatalhöyük ask different questions of the site. Some take a strong line regarding the role of women in the past, arguing that women were dominant and that the society was peaceful and without violence. Others want simply to engage in the site from a spiritual and religious point of view. Others have an educated interest in the evidence for the role of women at the site nine thousand years ago.

It is not possible for archaeologists to contribute to the religious view that the goddess is present at Çatalhöyük. But it is possible to try and respond to those women's groups that want to know about the role of women at the site. Was Gimbutas (1982) right in arguing for a powerful position for women, even a matriarchy, at these early sites? Can we identify the roles of men and women?

The work of the recent project at Çatalhöyük has been unable to identify clear differences between the roles of men and women in their daily lives. For example, if women were centrally involved in plant processing and cooking in the house, we might have expected some clear spatial differentiation between such activities and those associated with men. It is often assumed that men would have made obsidian tools, or at least obsidian projectile points. But at Çatalhöyük we have found that most houses have obsidian caches near the hearth and oven, and that there is clear evidence of knapping debris in these same areas. There are many ways of interpreting such evidence, but it is at least clear that there is no support for distinct gendered activity areas. Other evidence is less ambiguous. Stable isotope studies of human bone at the site have shown no clear dietary differences between males and females (Richards and Pearson 2003), and the same is true of teeth-wear studies (Andrews, Molleson and Boz 2003). We have found no systematic differences in the location and layout of male and female bodies and graves (Hamilton 2003). A few individuals at Çatalhöyük had their heads removed after burial. These heads were later used in foundation and abandonment ceremonies, and it is reasonable to suppose that they were involved in relations of inheritance or affiliation. If so, it is of interest that both male and female skulls were removed and deposited in this way. It was as important to establish social relations through women as it was through men.

So there is nothing to suggest that men and women lived very different gendered lives at Çatalhöyük. There is no evidence that in practice, gender was very important in assigning social roles. However, there are some clear differences in the art, and some

symbolic associations between women and plants. The famous figurine of a woman sitting on a seat of felines was found in a grain bin, and recently the project has found a small clay figurine of a woman with breasts, in the back of which was a cavity containing a small wild seed. Women are more often shown in a seated position. In the art, there are scenes of bearded figures involved in animal baiting and hunting and dancing. These clear differences in the depiction of men and women in the art may not relate to gendered differences in the practices of daily life. Rather, they may be metaphorical and idealized. But, in my view, there are no unambiguous depictions of women giving birth, or suckling or tending children. In other words, there is little evidence of the "Mother." Women are certainly depicted in powerful positions, such as sitting on felines with their hands resting on the heads, but there is no good evidence that this symbolic power derived from the "Mother" idea, rather than from other attributes of women such as their sexuality or their productive capacities.

These arguments, that women may not have had clearly gendered roles in practice, and that their symbolic significance is not necessarily related to the "Mother" idea, have angered many in the Goddess communities, but it would be unethical to carry on supporting arguments for which there appears to be little evidence. Many followers of the Goddess have engaged in dialogue and have been able to see that the new evidence can be incorporated into a revised perspective—for example, one in which women were powerful for reasons other than mothering and in which some equality existed in practice. Thus it is possible to ask questions that are of interest to particular groups, and then to enter into a dialogue that can contribute to changed perspectives.

## Artists

One of the most surprising components of the renewed research at Çatalhöyük has been the way in which the site attracts a variety of artists. These again vary in terms of specific motivation and interest. They include those who create works or performances about the site at other venues, and those involved in installation art at the site. There is also some overlap with the Goddess groups as several of the artists are inspired by the notion that women at Çatalhöyük had a more powerful role than in contemporary society.

One example is Jale Yılmazbaşı, an artist working in Istanbul. She recently held an exhibit of paintings in Istanbul that referred to the paintings that Mellaart has argued come from the site. Originally known in Turkey as a ceramicist, she has recently turned more to oil paintings, and her canvases are large, bold and colorful. She is not particularly interested in the site itself; more with the ways in which the project, and I as its director, can provide an extra dimension and validation to her work. Thus, I have been asked to name the paintings for her, and have been pictured in catalogues holding conversations with her in front of the paintings.

The pianist and composer Tuluyhan Uğurlu gave a concert in Istanbul inspired by Çatalhöyük. His music is popular and it mixes a variety of styles including Turkish motifs. He was trained as a concert pianist and composer mainly in Austria and describes

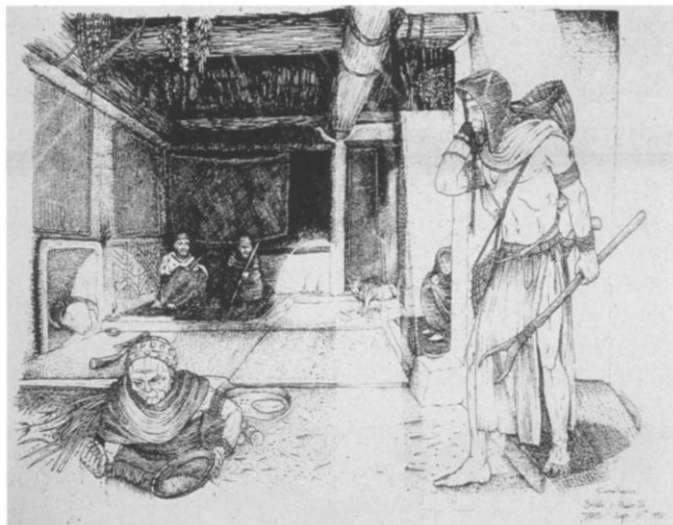
himself as ethnic, classical and New Age. He decided to write music about Çatalhöyük because of its global and New Age associations, but also because he came from Konya. One of the main parts of the concert centered on a poem written by Resit Ergener, a Turkish economist and tour guide, and co-organizer and leader of many of the Goddess tours to Çatalhöyük. The concert also used slides and images, taken from the project website. The music acted as a “frame” around the slides, which he watched as he played and to which he partly improvised.

Örge Tulga, who had a gallery exhibit of her gold and silver jewelry on display in Istanbul in 2002, explained how her designs were inspired by and based on the art of Çatalhöyük, especially the Goddess imagery. She also said how much she wanted to visit the site: “I want to come and feel the atmosphere. I want to live there a little.” The “atmosphere” referred to here is partly spiritual. This linking of performance, art and spirituality at the site itself is seen particularly in the work of Adrienne Momi. Again an organizer of Goddess tours, and based in California, she has constructed installation art at a number of prehistoric sites in Europe. In 2001 she made a spiral on the site itself. She worked closely with the archaeological team, learning about the current interpretations of the site. She engaged local people and school children in her art—which involved making paper on site, then making stamps based on the art from the site, and then printing these designs onto the paper and sticking the paper on a large paper spiral laid out on the grass slope of the Neolithic mound. She was careful to get official permission and throughout worked in a consensual way. The spiral and the art were meant to provide a channel of communication with the subconscious of the site. She called her installation “Turning Through Time: Communication with the distant past at Çatalhöyük.”

There are various ways in which artists can be engaged in the archaeological project. Another example involves the artists employed by the project itself to illustrate the finds and architecture. John Swogger has been working as an on-site



Adrienne Momi working on her art spiral at Çatalhöyük.



Reconstruction by John Swogger of the interior of Building 1 as seen from the entrance ladder, looking north into the main room with paintings around the northwest platform under which there is a concentration of young people buried.

archaeological illustrator at Çatalhöyük since 1998. He adamantly identifies himself as an illustrator rather than an artist, but as an illustrator who is pushing the rigid boundaries of archaeological illustration (Swogger 2000). By defying the strict, but what he sees as artificial, boundaries between the media considered to be the domain of the “artists” and the domain of the “the archaeological illustrators,” he suggests that all these media can be seen as a “tool—a mechanism or process for recording and presenting archaeological information in visual form.” He also argues that such an expansion and broadening of the definition of what archaeological illustration is gives the illustrator the freedom to embrace different types of media and styles that will enable exploration of different aspects of archaeological information. What he does is to create reconstructions based on the evidence provided by different specialists at the site. These sketches, drawings, and reconstructions provide means of visualizing various findings, interpretations, hypotheses, and theories. As Swogger points out, “combined with a process of exploring new modes of visual expression and looking carefully at the way ‘art’ can illustrate the data of ‘science,’ there could be here the potential for creating a powerful and important tool for managing on-site interpretation and analysis” (2000: 149). His illustrations and reconstructions have been integrated within the recording, analysis, and public presentation of the findings from the site.

Another artist, Nessa Leibhammer, also works as an illustrator, but she uses more straightforward artistic conventions and does not attempt to use detailed measured drawings. She feels that the scientific codified drawings do not capture the full sense of what is seen. Her more interpretive and aesthetic drawings complement the more scientific depictions. In contrast to Swogger’s illustrations, Leibhammer’s images are artistic and personal interpretive drawings that focus on the visible, physical aspects of archaeology, such as walls, rooms, and

spaces, rather than reconstructions that attempt to incorporate all the evidence from the site. But her drawings have also enriched and become part of the archaeological archive of Çatalhöyük. Her drawings and paintings provide a fuller sense of depth and volume in the complex wall plasters, and they are more successful at this than the measured line drawings.

So, one way of involving artists in the archaeological project is to engage them in the process of recording and expression. But another response is to attempt to answer the questions they ask about the role of “art” at Çatalhöyük nine thousand years ago. The artists bring their contemporary assumptions about aesthetics, framing and specialist production. And yet can we talk about the



**Nessa Leibhammer doing an artistic drawing of the same feature that is being drawn using archaeological conventions.**

symbolism at Çatalhöyük in these terms? Was this “art” at all? What was the role of the “art?” How can we interpret it?

I wish to suggest first of all that there are many different types of “art” at Çatalhöyük and that explanations will vary for the different types. I want here to restrict my comments to two particular classes of “art” at the site. The first is the relief sculpture. This is installed and remains as part of the house over a long time. The second is the geometric paintings. These occur on some wall plasters, but in any one house there may be over one hundred yearly replasterings of the walls in the main room. Few of these are ever painted. The paintings are transient and probably have a different explanation from the relief sculptures.

Let us take the relief sculptures first. These are incorporated into the architecture of the buildings. For example, bull horns may be set deeply into bricks in the walls, and plastered bucrania may be set on the upright posts that hold up the roof. The bucrania and relief leopards often have evidence of repeated painting, and may have lasted throughout the lifetime of a house. In addition, during the abandonment of the house, as in Building 2 (Farid 2003), bucrania and other sculpture were removed from western walls in the main rooms. In the case of Building 1, the building was filled up with soil on abandonment, and then some decades later a trench was dug down to remove sculpture from the western

wall (Cessford 2003). This suggests a clear memory of the location of these bucrania, and their retrieval, perhaps to use in later houses. The retention of animal heads in this way recalls the removal of heads from human skeletons buried below floors. It seems feasible that the plastered animal heads acted as mnemonics of important events in the history of households, and that they acted as markers of lineage and ancestry. They were incorporated into the fabric of the house, literally holding it up.

The geometric paintings are very different in their social roles. Through most of the life of any particular house, the walls were white. But for short periods of time they became transformed into a blaze of color and activity, either as figurative or geometric paintings. The paintings were then plastered over and the walls reverted to their plain form. Here I can only comment on the geometric painting as we have not found figurative narrative scenes in the recent excavations. But in Building 1, a clue as to the function of these paintings has been found. Here there is a spatial and temporal link between geometric painting and the burial of mainly young people. It is the northwest platform in the main room that is surrounded by painting during part of the occupation of the house. It is this platform under which young people were preferentially buried. But there is also a temporal link. It is always difficult to assess which wall plaster goes with which floor plaster, and only approximate correlations could be made in Building 1. But in general terms the phases of painting corresponded to the phases of burial under this platform. One possible interpretation of this link is that the geometric painting acted in some way to protect or to communicate with the dead below the platform. Gell (1998) has discussed the apotropaic use of art, and this seems a reasonable interpretation in the case of Building 1. A comparable association has been found in the adjacent Building 3 (Stevanovic and Tringham 1999), where again the northwest platform contained most burial in the main room, and red paint concentrated (or was best preserved) on the walls around this same northwest platform.

So in both cases the “art” is not “art” in the sense of something simply to be contemplated with aesthetic sensibilities. Rather, art at Çatalhöyük does something (Gell 1998). It can be interpreted as playing a social role in relation to lineage and in relation to interaction with the dead. In this sense it perhaps contrasts with the activities of the contemporary artists at Çatalhöyük. At one level too, their art, especially the installation art, is designed to do something. And yet it remains an aesthetic expression somewhat removed from daily practice. It can be argued that the nine thousand year old “art” at Çatalhöyük is closer to science than it is to contemporary art, in the sense that it aims to intervene in the world, to understand how it works, to change it. Thus the dialogue between ancient and contemporary artists can lead to changes of perspective both for artists and archaeologists. The dialogue challenges the tendency among contemporary artists to appropriate the art into their own perspective. The archaeological evidence can contribute to an understanding of the “otherness” of prehistoric art.



## Ethics and Archaeology

In a globalized world, archaeologists increasingly work with multiple communities. I have tried to provide examples of some of the problems and issues that are raised in such a context. I have tried to suggest that rather than just setting our own agenda, it is possible to negotiate research questions with a number of groups. It is possible to collaborate with these groups in relation to the answers given and the interpretations made.

Çatalhöyük is perhaps an extreme site in that so many stakeholder groups are involved. On the other hand, in many parts of the world archaeologists work in the context of contested pasts. I have tried to argue here that archaeologists have an ethical responsibility to ask questions about the past that resonate with stakeholder communities. But it is also clear that the answers to such questions may be uncomfortable for specific stakeholder groups. They may involve the archaeologist taking a stance with regard to how the data can be used to support arguments that are made by interested parties. Archaeology becomes reflexively part of the social process.

## Note

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