

Assembling Çatalhöyük

Edited by Ian Hodder and Arkadiusz Marciniak

Themes in Contemporary Archaeology

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Cover image(s): *Left*: Ochre hand prints on the north wall of Building 77; *Middle*: Bucrania and horned bench associated with the northeast platform of Building 77 (both taken from Taylor pp. 127–50, this volume); *Right*: The incised panel above burial 327 in TP Area (taken from Marciniak et al., pp. 151–66, this volume).

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CHAPTER 6

Reconciling the Body

Signifying Flesh, Maturity, and Age at Çatalhöyük

JESSICA PEARSON, LYNN MESKELL, CAROLYN NAKAMURA AND CLARK SPENCER LARSEN

INTRODUCTION

Studies of the body in archaeology have, until recent years, been conducted using discrete datasets including physical and biological evidence from skeletal remains (White, 2005; Sofaer, 2006; Geller, 2008; Agarwal & Glencross, 2011) or bodily representations in material culture (Meskell, 1999; Rautman, 2000; Loren, 2001; Thomas, 2004; Nanoglou, 2008), but rarely the two together. This separation has been produced through the fundamental distinction between the biological and the cultural specializations within the discipline and the ways in which the body has been approached. Despite being living organisms, the mode of living by humans (diet, labour, reproduction) is predominantly socially constructed and ordered (Turner, 2008) much like the objects in a burial assemblage, the scene in a wall painting or the shape of a figurine. Attempts to provide interdisciplinary studies of the body that combine these areas are increasing through novel theoretical frameworks concerning burial assemblages (i.e. Sofaer Derevenski, 2000; Nakamura & Meskell, 2013a, 2013b; Pearson & Meskell, 2014). We argue that the compatibility between all aspects of the body offers an opportunity to provide a much more robust basis for identifying embodied social choices and constraints. We demonstrate this using evidence from a range of data collected from bodies at Çatalhöyük.

BACKGROUND

As well as being a large (13 ha) Neolithic site, the houses were densely packed and the population size, although difficult to determine with any certainty, likely grew to several thousand individuals during the peak phase of occupation making the site possibly one of the largest communities in Southwest Asia at this time. Substantial numbers of individuals were buried at the site almost exclusively beneath the floors of

domestic structures. A small number of individuals were buried in open areas and middens. All age groups (neonates to older adults) and both sexes are represented in the burials excavated so far (approximately five hundred relatively complete individuals and several hundred fragmented remains), leading to the assumption that the human remains recovered represent a random cross-section of the living population.

Extensive analysis of the human remains is provided elsewhere (Hillson et al., 2013; Larsen et al., 2013). Therefore, we focus here on age-related patterning observed in these data. Among the pathological conditions, younger males had an especially high prevalence of osteoarthritis suggesting that men entered the workforce or engaged in strenuous activities at earlier ages than women. Further evidence includes a greater bending stress on the femur in males compared with females, suggesting men engaged in more walking and running than did women (Larsen et al., 2013). Pathological conditions such as trauma and bone fractures indicate injuries were generally sustained during accidents with little differences between males and females, suggesting they took part in similar daily activities. The one exception is the incidence of trauma-related pathological lesions on individuals in the adolescent and young adult age categories, which showed a greater incidence of such injuries among males (Larsen et al., 2013). Stable isotope analysis at the site indicates a general absence of any sex-related differences in diet suggests that there were no foods that were considered exclusively for men or women. Instead, changes in food consumed at Çatalhöyük occurred across the life course (older childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood), indicating the existence of a social mechanism that marked ageing in the community (Pearson et al., in press).

For the people of Çatalhöyük, the objects placed with them at burial also reveal their biographies and are testament to their ability to survive and accumulate over their life course. From 1995 to 2008, 456 objects and 6252 beads from 244 Neolithic burial features

were recovered. Objects that were found directly with individuals include jewellery, incised tusks, claws, shells, chipped stone, clay balls, ground stone, baskets, pigment, textiles, wood, plaster, and worked bone (Nakamura & Meskell, 2013b). Most individuals, however, received no burial goods, and those that did were typically meagre. Our analysis reveals that when burial goods are included, they are drawn from life, rather than being a suite of objects specifically directed towards death or the notion of an afterlife. Detailed assessment by Bains (2012) of the beads found in burials indicates a number of age-related patterns that show how beads buried with adults generally have greater variability in raw material types and shape, but not in colour or size compared with sub-adults. Some of the greatest variability is seen in the adolescent age group (12–19 years), which likely contains some ‘social adults’. The least variability is seen in the beads from the burials of younger individuals typically neonatal, infant, and child assemblages. Like the skeletal remains themselves, their burial assemblages indicate that age and maturity is a key structuring principle (Nakamura & Meskell, 2013a).

Once interpreted as evidence for a Mother Goddess cult (Mellaart, 1967; Gimbutas, 1989), new studies on the figurines too suggest other possible readings about the significance of flesh, ageing, maturity, and longevity (Nakamura & Meskell, 2009). Anthropomorphic ‘figurines were important because they were the habitual presentation of the human body’ (Bailey, 2005: 123). They saturated communities with specific images of

the human body. That continued presence must have been formative in developing notions of embodiment and being. However, it is no longer viable to study figurines solely as an isolated category, what Bailey (2005: 13) has termed ‘figurine essentialism’. At Çatalhöyük, and other prehistoric sites, figurines are routinely incorporated into excavational analyses, specifically spatial analyses and work on figurine densities (Nakamura, 2004; Lopiparo & Hendon, 2006; Meskell et al., 2008; Halperin, 2009; Nakamura & Meskell, 2013a). Several thousand complete figurines and fragments have been recovered from the site including 455 anthropomorphic examples discussed here (Figure 1). We argue that figurine analysis can be usefully integrated not only within material culture studies but also within altogether different analytical fields such as faunal analysis, (e.g. Martin & Meskell, 2012) and stable isotope analysis, and physical anthropology (Pearson & Meskell, 2014).

FOOD, FLESH, AND DEATH

The study of food provides a valuable opportunity to study the embodied physical and social aspects of a society. Human beings require food to grow, thrive, and reproduce, but the foods that we prepare and consume to do this vary considerably between countries and within different parts of a society both in the present day and in the past (Pearson et al., 2013). Food, therefore, is effectively used as a simultaneous

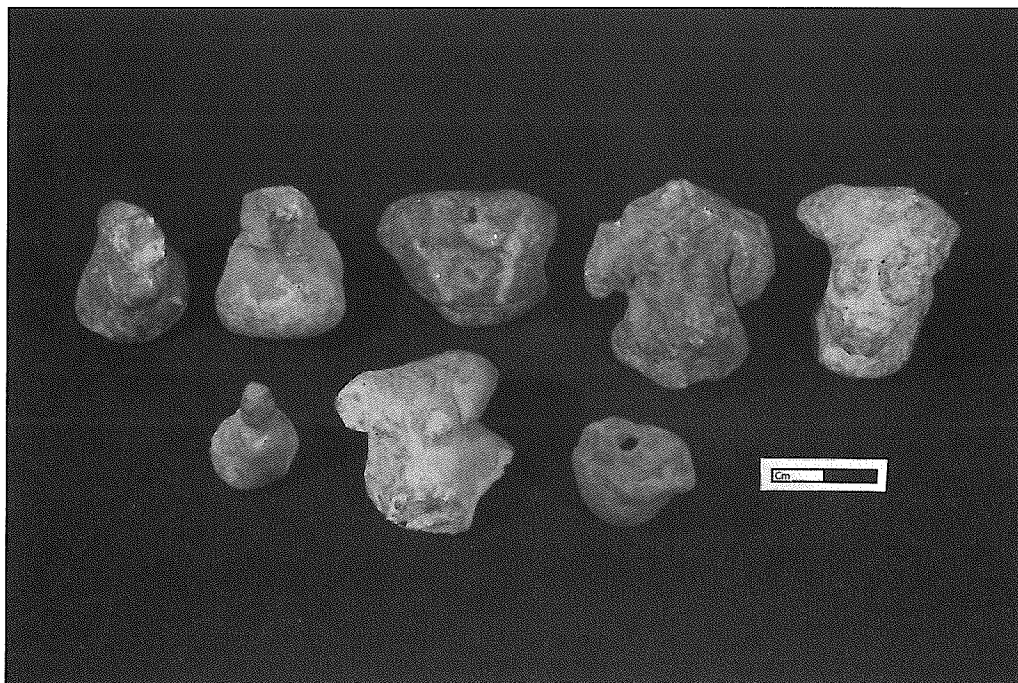


Figure 1. *Assemblage of figurines showing emphasized buttocks, drooping breasts, and stomachs.* Photo courtesy of the Çatalhöyük Research Project and Jason Quinlan.

system of nourishment and communication in communities (Barthes, 1997), a practice that accords well with Bourdieu (1984)'s classic notion of *habitus*, this being formed according to a person's location whereby the regulations, structures, and allowances together build a cultural world view within which individuals operate (Shilling, 1996). In contemporary western culture, food is considered to offer a solution to a range of ageing preoccupations: younger skin, greater brain function, better vision, improved fertility, stronger muscle and bone, and increased longevity. By making our diets more 'natural', we have made them healthier (and consequently ourselves) in order to take control of our own mortality. This 'mortality salience', a term that describes human recognition that we will eventually die, can also be seen in other areas of consumption (Fransen et al., 2008). Mortality salience effectively creates a cultural worldview, which 'gives meaning and order to the world' and thereby control over the uncertain and uncontrollable (Becker, 1973) and helps to explain why as humans we accumulate particular goods.

FOOD, FLESH, AND DEATH: RE-/CONCEIVING THE BODY IN THE NEOLITHIC MIDDLE EAST

The relationship between food, flesh, and death is a recurrent theme among the mortuary practices of the Neolithic Middle East. One obvious anthropological trope that ties these three themes together is feasting. Indeed, recent research on the Çatalhöyük faunal remains has argued for evidence of feasting at the site (Russell & Martin, 2005; Twiss, 2008; Twiss & Russell, 2010). While explanatory concepts such as 'the feast' are often necessary in order to make some sense of the past, they can also blunt more nuanced considerations of social life and community dynamics. In order to resist the uncritical acceptance of certain premises that inform the concept of the feast, we instead pursue a more modest line of argumentation that considers the specific ways in which food, flesh, and death may have been productively linked in Neolithic Çatalhöyük.

Food substances and activities at Çatalhöyük were often enframated by ritualized acts. Botanical remains, generally interpreted as relating to quotidian food practices, have, for instance, appeared in the contexts of closure, transition, and burial. In Building 1, Cessford (2007: 479–82) noted that a bin found in the central room contained lentils, but also a horse scapula and at least thirteen wild goat horns; he interpreted the collection as an abandonment deposit rather than a store. Abandonment deposits are fairly common at the site and have been viewed as deliberate and placed during the end (or beginning) of a life cycle of a

building (Russell et al., 2009; see also Nakamura, 2010). Marked with special deposits or provisions, the treatment of buildings often echoes certain aspects of human burials. The evidence for the communal consumption of animal flesh at Çatalhöyük comes from data that have been interpreted as feasting activities, which researchers often tie to moments of death or closure (Russell et al., 2009). Additionally, a study of the entire horn core corpus has led Twiss & Russell (2010) to conclude that there was a distinct preference for wild, mature, and male animals in these so-called feasting and ritual activities. However, the idea of feasting has been deployed in order to cast evidence for communal social practices in rather broad strokes, invoking ideas of public display, social integration and consolidation, communal identity building, and commemoration; in such accounts, the performative and representational aspects of feasting completely elide the potentially important symbolic and material consumption of particular kinds of foods and flesh (Pearson & Meskell, 2013).

But flesh in its various forms and capacities, was both a symbolic and pragmatic of concern in the Neolithic Middle East. The manipulation of fleshy bodies, human and animal, occurred in many forms and at a number of sites. At least some inhabitants were intimately acquainted the various capacities of flesh of both living and deceased humans. Secondary burial (removal of part of the skeleton from the primary burial location and re-interment elsewhere) is a common feature of mortuary practice in this period. This required either waiting for a period of time for flesh and tendons to have fully decomposed, or the willingness to cut into bodies to remove particular elements. Headless bodies and isolated crania and limbs sometimes with cutmarks indicating decapitation and defleshing have been found at Çatalhöyük (Boz & Hager, 2013), Çayönü Tepesi (Özdoğan & Özdoğan, 1998), and Kortik Tepe (Erdal, 2014). Manipulation of bodies is also clear from the instances of in-life modification of human crania such as Jericho (Kenyon & Holland, 1981) and later at Arpachiyah (Molleson & Campbell, 1995), but also the recreation of bodies through the use of plaster. Virtually life-size plastered figures have been found at 'Ain Ghazal (Rollefson, 1990), and somewhat overlooked, is the plastering of post-cranial parts of the body as seen at Çatalhöyük (Boz & Hager, 2013) and Kortik Tepe (Erdal, 2014). Incidences of plastered skulls found famously at Jericho (Kenyon & Holland, 1981), 'Ain Ghazal (Rollefson, 1990), Kfar Hahores (Goring-Morris, 2000), and more recently also at Çatalhöyük (Hodder, 2007) among others (see Fletcher et al., 2008 for an overview), which show no attempt to overly modify, are particularly significant. Modelling in plaster provides an opportunity to completely

transform, and yet this extreme is resisted suggesting an importance given to preservation and rejuvenation through enfleshment (Meskell et al., 2008).

Flesh then, was not only consumed, but created, manipulated, and maintained in different ways and modalities. Such activities point to complex dynamics and conceptions underwriting the social order. Although ethnographic comparisons across time and space must be levied with considerable caution, they often demonstrate a level of social complexity (lacking in more general concepts) that could inspire us to pursue new lines of questioning. Take the idea of the feast: the ritual consumption of animal flesh does not always occur in large scale, socially consolidating displays; in some cases, it mediates nuanced exchanges in which the type and preparation of the flesh is essential. Mosko (1983) has studied how the exchange and consumption of different preparations of wild and domesticated pig flesh is central to Bush Mekeo (in Melanesia) de-conception rituals that frame marriage and death, and maintain their social structure over time. Mosko also interprets these rituals as maintaining particular ideas of open (fat, wet, fluid) and closed (thin, light, dry) states associated with Mekeo conceptions of female and male, respectively. Village (domesticated) pigs are castrated males that are fattened with considerable quantities of wet food and butchered on the day of consumption, while wild bush pigs are thin and lean, aged through smoke drying for months prior to the feast. These different kinds of meat symbolize two kinds of blood and relationship of the deceased. The exchange and consumption of these meats thus can symbolically purge specific kin bloods and return them to where they originated. While the specific meanings and actions outlined in the Mekeo case above cannot be applied to the Çatalhöyük case, Mosko's analysis of burial exchange does underscore how the consumption of flesh in the context of death can be involved in the work of de-conceiving or forgetting, rather than incorporating or solidifying (see Battaglia, 1992). Moreover, Melanesian examples demonstrate that mortuary rituals often grapple with unresolvable contradictions in complex social relations and serve to create an orienting ground for social relatedness that often requires acts of severance, recreation, and reattachment (Munn, 1986; Wagner, 1986; Thune, 1989).

At Çatalhöyük, a specific attention to food and flesh may have animated the life cycle of houses as well as individuals. What ties these three modes together is the conditioning of a body that mediates productive social exchange. In such exchange, forgetting, cutting off, and de-conception are likely as important as acts of remembering, reconstituting, and protecting; however, the former are frequently left out of archaeological accounts. One must also pay

attention to transitional contexts such as death and abandonment, in which rituals often confront the tensions or contradictions that arise from the daily reality of complex and sometimes competing claims of allegiance and belonging. As we will argue below, various modalities of Neolithic life often do not reinforce each other (for instance, real vs. represented bodies) and this should be expected. Such complexity is largely inaccessible from a single dataset and analytical approach. Rather, multi-level analyses that explore how bodies were physically, socially, and symbolically constituted and modified can reveal a more specific and sophisticated picture of how social identity, order, and relationships were embodied.

BIOARCHAEOLOGY AND FLESHING OUT AGE AND IDENTITY AT ÇATALHÖYÜK

The large assemblage of human remains from all age groups at Çatalhöyük has enabled stable isotope analysis and diet reconstruction of the different age groups of 145 inhabitants ranging from neonates, infants, children, adolescents to young, middle-aged, and old adults (Pearson et al., 2015). Most studies of food in archaeology, anthropology, and sociology tend to focus on adults, with subadult studies concerned mainly with biological aspects of food such as health, morbidity, and mortality through breastfeeding and weaning practices.

The stable isotope data from neonatal skeletons show a large degree of variation for both isotopes relative to adults. Neonatal bone is formed during the third trimester and entirely composed of food consumed by the mother. Some variation in neonatal values may relate to small errors in ageing methodologies but the majority suggests that pregnant females enjoyed a variable diet related to either social preferences and regulations, or perhaps seasonal availability and distribution of food. Among infants, the nitrogen isotope data suggest that weaning begins at approximately eighteen months of age and is completed by approximately three years of age (Pearson et al., 2015). Following the weaning period, while the carbon isotope values of younger children continue to drop gradually, the nitrogen isotope values drop dramatically so, reaching a low of 9.6‰ compared to an adult average of 12.6‰. These data have been argued to suggest that the diet of these children contains adequate protein with lower nitrogen isotope values than that of adults (Pearson et al., 2015). Later childhood (10+ years of age) seems to be associated with food with higher nitrogen isotope values that increases nitrogen isotope towards adult values. The cause of this could relate to a number of physiological effects,

although these do not fully explain these data, and the most parsimonious explanation is that younger children consumed a specific diet (Pearson et al., forthcoming).

Comparison of stable isotope values through young adulthood, middle age, and older adulthood has previously shown a significant difference in carbon but not nitrogen isotope values between the different age groups (Pearson & Meskell, 2014; Figure 2). These data are interpreted as younger adults having access to plants or animals from different areas of the landscape with lower amounts of C4 plants. Isotope characterization of the faunal assemblage indicates that wild animals (particularly equids and boar), as well as having lower nitrogen isotope ratios, also had relatively few C4 plants in their diet (Pearson, 2013). Indeed, younger adults may have enjoyed the meat of these hunted animals, whereas middle-aged and older adults consumed meat from domesticated animals such as sheep and cattle. However, since boar and equids also have lower nitrogen isotope ratios, which is not reflected in the adult isotope values, this would also seem to suggest that differentiation in animal protein was not simply weight for weight. Instead, younger adults may have consumed more meat from wild animals than the middle-aged and older adults did from domestic animals (Pearson & Meskell, 2014).

Full accounts of the burial practice, community structure, health, diet, lifestyle, and activity of the Çatalhöyük population are given elsewhere (Boz & Hager, 2013; Hillson et al., 2013; Larsen et al., 2013). Age and sex determinations follow standard criteria outlined in Hillson et al. (2013). There is some age patterning among the pathological conditions. The results of the osteoarthritis study (Larsen et al., 2013) reveal that greater severity occurred in older individuals more often than not in men. Unusually, at Çatalhöyük younger males had an especially high incidence and this has led to the hypothesis that males entered the workforce or engaged in strenuous activities at earlier ages than females. No patterns of mobility were observed in the juvenile remains. Other pathological conditions such as trauma and bone fractures indicate injuries sustained during accidents with little difference between males and females indicating they took part in similar daily activities. The one exception is the incidence of trauma-related pathological lesions on individuals in the adolescent and young adult age categories, which showed a greater incidence of such injuries among males (Larsen et al., 2013).

Social rules concerning food would have been long lived and would have required regular maintenance and reinforcement in social settings, including household activities and commensality. Stable isotope

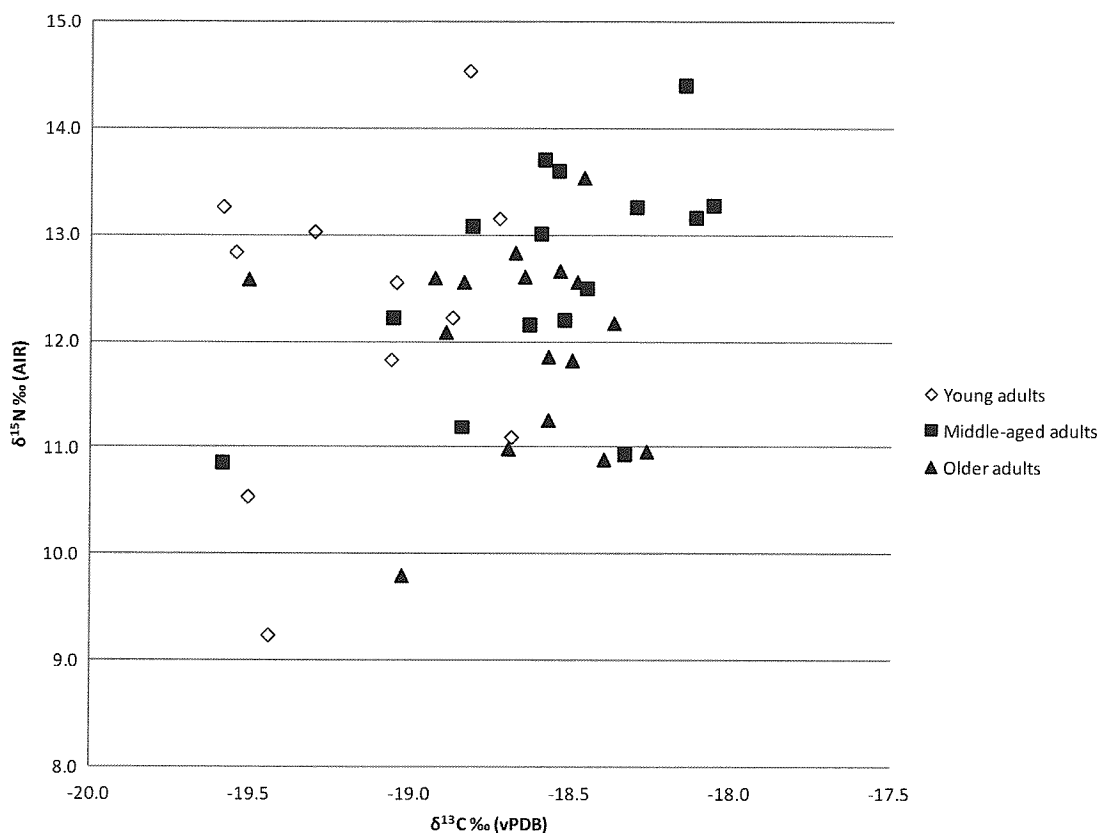


Figure 2. Human isotope data according to age stage (young adults 20–30 years, middle-aged adults 30–40 years, and older adults 50 years +).

evidence of diet directly links individuals and their bodies by cataloguing long-term regulations about food consumption through which individuals and groups invested in bodies. These age-related differences in diet and activity through life suggest that the Çatalhöyük community had an embodied understanding of ageing. Life cycles have been identified at the site in a range media and biological agents (possible annual plastering of floors, cultivation of crops, management/hunting of animals, neonates in building foundations). What seems to have been identified in humans is that either the cumulative passage of time was subsequently marked by a change in social status, or that a more nuanced transition that might relate to life events in both sexes occurred. Entirely social behaviours were learned and marked in childhood and adolescence and into the latter stages of young adulthood. We suggest that these differences in diet underpinned social agency at Çatalhöyük enabling agents to identify between themselves and subsequent ordering of the community (Douglas, 1984).

MAKING BODIES: USES OF PLASTER AND CLAY AT ÇATALHÖYÜK

Some potent examples of this recognition of bodily vulnerability and precariousness can be found in the treatment of particular bodies after death at Çatalhöyük. Given the practice of intramural burial at the site and evidence of the particular type of generational circulation and manipulation of bodies, we can say that the inhabitants were very familiar with bodily decay, physical partibility, and the fragility of human remains. Various cultural strategies were employed to ameliorate these physical realities; the most obvious being the enhancement of the dead body through substances like plaster. Just as walls were repeatedly plastered and built up in layers to give them a new skin, so too were skeletal remains. In Building 49, a middle-aged female (sk. 14441) was buried with plaster applied to the lower legs, both feet, the lower left arm, and right hand. Some of these bones were entirely encased in plaster. In the same building, a child was also buried with plaster on the legs and feet. But the most dramatic example of this technique is the plastered skull (Hodder, 2006) from Building 42, showing multiple layers of plaster applied to flesh out the life-like appearance of the head as a living, not deceased, person (Hodder, 2007). Given the number of plasterings, we can say that this skull likely was in circulation for a lengthy time. This concern with flesh as a living substance, mimicked by smoothed plasters, was a preoccupation that crossed the species divide as well. For example, in Building 52, there is a bench

with attached plastered horns and a bucrania that would have been attached to the wall (Bogdan, 2005). Productions such as these evoked a life-like quality for perpetuity with the addition of plaster and shaping.

Both clay and plaster could have symbolized flesh, the former specifically for figurines and the latter for house installations and the walls or 'skins' of houses, as well as animal and human re-fleshing and revivifying. The colour, texture, softness, sheen, plasticity, and ability to layer and smooth must have made plaster an evocative material. Given the qualities of plaster—that it protects, transforms, and fortifies an underlying substructure—it is tempting to view the practice of plastering in terms of maintaining, building up, and indeed 'enfleshing' (Meskell et al., 2008). Plaster provides the possibility to transform an individual beyond recognition, and yet the use of plaster on the skull at Çatalhöyük is modest, suggesting a focus on reconstruction rather than transformation. Figurines, plastered bucrania, and animal remains, as well as plastered skulls all underwrite the tension between fleshed and skeletal bodies, which are mediated by practices such as plastering bucrania, human skulls, and figurine production. An evocative example of this tension is apparent in a headless figurine (12,401.x7, Figure 3) that depicts an articulated skeleton on the back and a corpulent female with large breasts and stomach on the front. This figurine can be interpreted as representing that tension between flesh and bone and their attendant, complex associations with life, survival, and vitality, and emphasizing that these figural bodies are indeed made, modified, and unmade. Figurine makers sought to reconstitute the living body through plastering and painting, thus improving upon the bony scaffolding of bodies after death (Meskell et al., 2008). This view is further bolstered by evidence for the use of red paint, particularly with human skulls and their circulation after death. Red paint was also noted on the headless figurine described above. Taken together, these practices may be the testament to a material concern for co-producing and rendering permanent ancestors by again improving upon the frailties of flesh.

Flesh may serve as a material sign of longevity, good health, food security, sedentary lifestyles, and the ability to give. The explicit roundness of numerous figurines may have tangibly rendered an ideal visual metaphor for abundance and accumulation. Given the particular character of the representational and figural data from Çatalhöyük, we suggest that examination of the anthropomorphic figurines provides another avenue to explore the cultural significance of corporeality. Prior analysis of a subset of 455 figurines (Nakamura & Meskell, 2009), specifically the anthropomorphic examples and their attendant bodily characteristics, has revealed how Neolithic people themselves marked their own preoccupations with

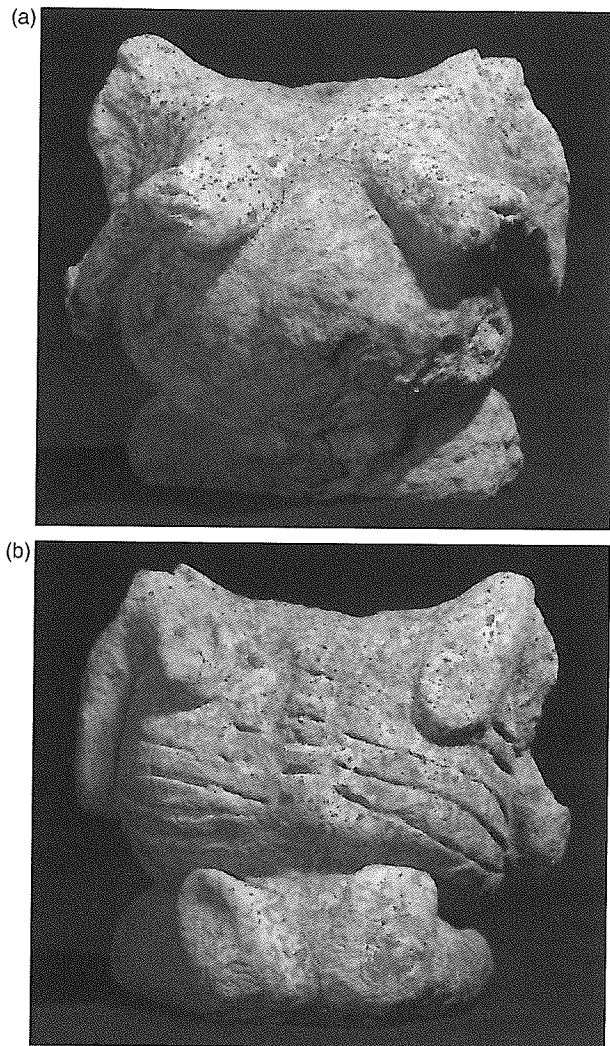


Figure 3. *Figuring 12401.X7, showing a fleshed front (a) and skeletonized back (b).*

Photo courtesy of the Çatalhöyük Research Project and Jason Quinlan.

bodily form. Nakamura and Meskell argue that there was a strong tendency for delineating and exaggerating the buttock and stomach regions in the female and non-gendered figurines. The emphasis of the buttocks and stomachs was typically at the expense of other bodily characteristics such as limbs and sometimes even breasts. While breasts were the trait most commonly depicted (since both males and females have them), the stomach and buttocks received the most exaggeration. This phenomenon was characterized by Nakamura & Meskell (2009) as the Three B's: breasts, buttocks, and bellies. These are obviously the fleshiest part of the body, where excess energy from the diet accumulates as fat and where the body can manifest distinctive visual signs of ageing or maturity. The prominence of such features may refer to fertility or abundance, but can also indicate longevity and survival. Voigt (2007) discussed this issue with seventy-six clay and stone figurines from level VI at Hacilar

(c. 6000 BC), noting the predilection for drooping stomachs and accentuated buttocks. Hacilar dates to the upper end of the Neolithic sequence at Çatalhöyük, and many of our examples of sagging and protruding derive from the latest levels at Çatalhöyük. Voigt argues that these robust evocations represent bodies worn by work and childbirth, and as such, these were ordinary women that served as models for adult roles within the society.

Given the high number of figurines representing the aged and ageing, we suggest that the role of older individuals in the Çatalhöyük community may have been particularly significant

Elders supervised and safeguarded the transmission of relevant socioeconomic skills (animal husbandry, social communication, manufacture and sexuality), and some of them were more skilled or renowned for this than others and were sought out by a much larger number of people from other households—and acquired more authority and power as a result[...] As certain elders gained in power and authority and lost physical stamina, they may have become increasingly confined to the house both in a practical sense and in the sense of becoming guardians of the goods, skills, capacities and identities stored there. (Hodder & Pels, 2010: 183)

One observable arena for a difference in representation is the human figures on wall art; in paintings humans are slim and rendered more dynamically, rather than in seated postures (see the Hunting Shrine, Shrine F (Mellaart, 1966)). They may depict younger, more active individuals, some clearly marked as male. This is reflected in the isotope data, where younger adults may have consumed the meat of hunted animals (Pearson & Meskell, 2014). There are a few exceptions in these paintings, one corpulent figure positioned below the famous bull on the north wall, another on the north end of the west wall of Shrine F. Humans when painted generally appear in motion, with an emphasis on limbs indicating different activities such as dancing or hunting, whereas the figurine and plastered features are much more static and compact.

BIOGRAPHICAL BODIES

For the people of Çatalhöyük, both the bodies and the objects placed with them at burial reveal their biographies and are testament to their ability to survive and accumulate over their life course. From 1995 to 2008, 456 objects and 6252 beads from 244 Neolithic burial features were recovered. Objects that were found directly with individuals include jewellery, incised tusks, claws, shells, chipped stone, clay balls, ground stone, baskets, lumps of pigment, textiles, wood, lumps of plaster, and worked bone (Nakamura &

Meskel, 2013b). Most individuals, however, received no burial goods, and those that did were typically meagre. Our analysis reveals that when burial goods are included, they are drawn from life, rather than being a suite of objects specifically directed towards death or the notion of an afterlife.

In the burial assemblage, both men and women are found with thirty different types of artefacts both directly and indirectly associated with the body. Of the most common occurrences, we find beads, pigment, and worked bone with both male and females; however, beads and pigment are found more frequently with females. Extensive analysis of burial artefacts suggests that age, not gender, was the most salient structuring principle. Neonates and infants were buried with matting, baskets, and occasionally burial goods. Infants and children were not buried with 'toys' *per se* but were frequently interred with a range of artefacts. There was little variance in their overall burial assemblage, likely reflecting the materialization of adult choices. The objects gifted, via these acts of donation, were indeed similar to those placed with mature and older adults. Adolescents, on the other hand, rarely received burial items and when they did only beads and bone pins. It was adults, specifically older individuals, who acquired the most complex and biographically rich burials (Nakamura & Meskel, 2013b). This may extend beyond a simple expression of their technical skill to encompass on ritual or ancestral prowess, to reference to wider connections in the landscape and to even human–animal relationships. Significantly, many of these objects interred with older individuals have an accumulated history of use.

Similar to the figural evidence, the burial assemblage also hints at the salience of maturity. Longevity and survival may have been markers of status, and this is bolstered by the few burials that contain the most diverse, elaborated, and biographical objects like those from Building 50, especially two older individuals (sks. 10829 and 10813) who lived beyond 50 years of age (Figure 4). Skeleton 10829 is an older female who had three incised boar tusks on the upper body, similar to one Mellaart found in another female burial in house VII.12 (Mellaart, 1967: 98). These tusks may have been worn as jewellery or attached to a garment (Russell et al., 2004). The fact that the only other example has been found with an adult woman, at roughly the same time period (South M), and strikingly, in a directly adjacent building suggests a marked connection. This co-occurrence might signify a shared identity, age cohort, ritual affiliation, or other grouping. Lastly, a string of bone and stone beads was placed on her upper chest and she wore an anklet made of mock deer canine beads. In the same building, an older man (sk. 10813) was buried with a number of directly associated artefacts such as a bone

hook that was placed on his chest (10813.x1). The hook was made by shaping and perforating the caudal end of an otherwise unmodified left aurochs premaxilla (Russell et al., 2004). Mellaart described finding a similar one (1962: Pl.VI) 'carved in the form of a stork's head'. Beneath the left leg and above the lower right ribs was a cluster of five flint tools (10813.x2–5) and one antler tool (10813.x6). This tool may have been designed for pressure flaking, yet no traces of use were visible (Russell et al., 2004). Below the skeleton, reddish brown discolorations may be the residues of textiles. Taken together, this unique concentration of tools and equipment may hint at the man's activities and skills acquired during his lifetime. Longevity, as Caspari and Lee argue (2004), is necessary for the transgenerational accumulation and transfer of information that allows for complex social networks.

Just as isotope ratios from bone reveal a cumulative biography of individual life choices and corporeal history, so too does the burial assemblage. Isotope ratios provide a different source of biographical information concerning the body. Although it cannot be used to identify detailed episodes of consumption, it does have the potential to reveal whether food was used in daily life to reinforce social structures. The variations in carbon and nitrogen isotope ratios observed at Çatalhöyük, which indicate different diets between younger and middle aged/older adults, could only have been achieved through eating particular foods on a regular, probably daily, basis. These data are not evidence of one-off events. Instead, they preserve evidence of the persistent nature with which particular people in the community consumed some foods. Faunal remains, on the other hand, suggest that the periodic shared consumption of less common food sources also took place. Food played both a nutritive and symbolic role in the lives of people at Çatalhöyük. While daily repetitious consumption may have reinforced long-established social identities, the consumption of certain special foods may have provided opportunities to reinscribe or reorder the wider social order. Occasions of death, especially of socially significant individuals, may have enabled a number of exchanges and gestures that reinforced or reordered social relationships. The capacity to accumulate as revealed in the biographically rich burial inclusions of older individuals may speak not just to the life or identity of the deceased but also the extent and nature of his or her embeddedness and relatedness in the community.

CONCLUSION

We have shown here how the seemingly disparate archaeological evidence from figurines, plastered

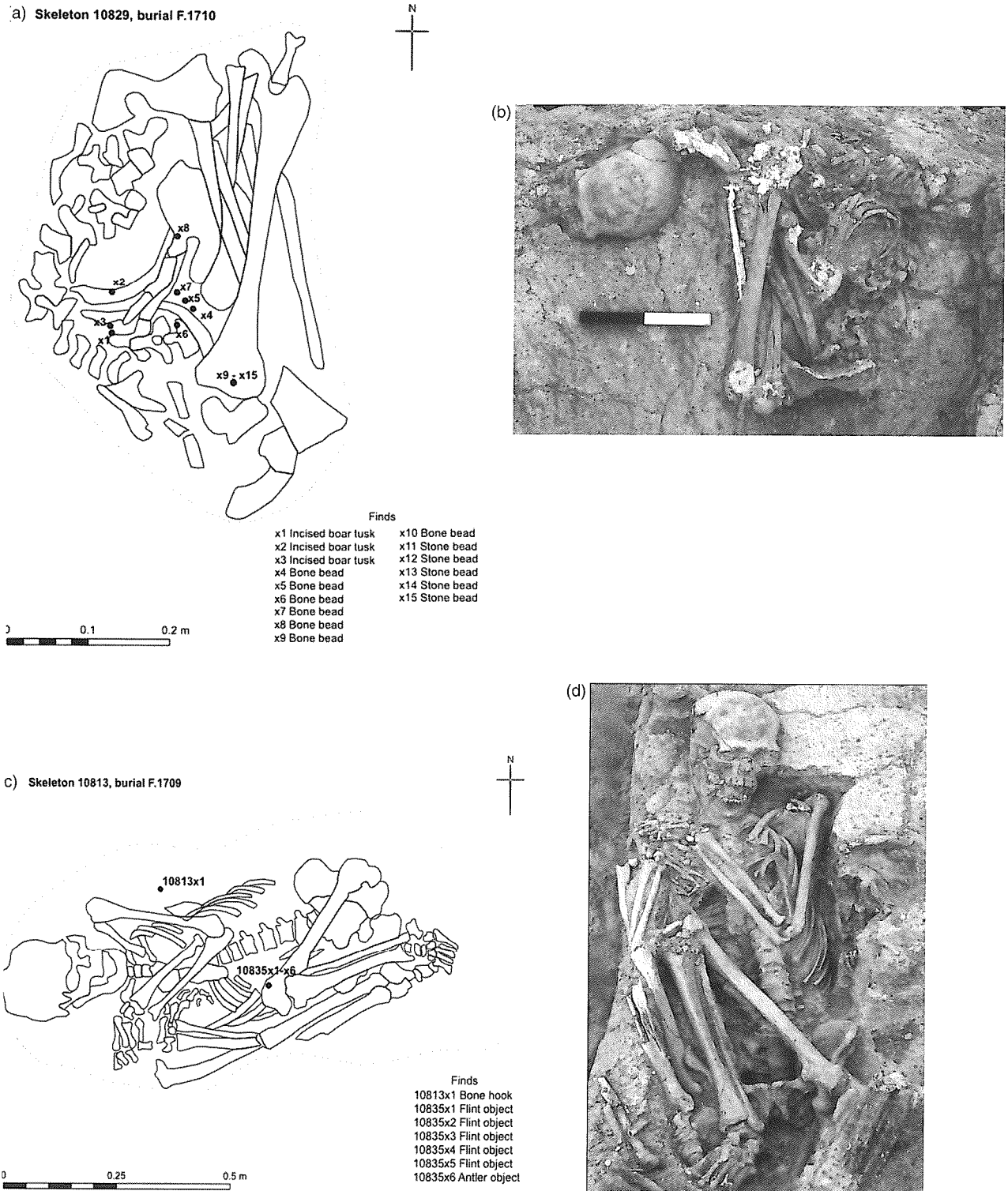


Figure 4. Skeleton 10829 (a) and 10813 (c) with associated finds (b, d). Photograph by Scott Haddow and Camilla Mazzucato.

installations, burials, and diet can be woven together to provide a deeper understanding of both the social and the physical realms of the body. Douglas (1978: 70) long ago argued that each body is both a physical entity and a representation. The social body can be read as a symbolic representation and that representational reality ‘constrains the way the physical body is

perceived’. We suggest here that these two realms, the physical or lived body and the representational body, while distinct, need to be considered in tandem. These two types of bodies constitute different nodes of experience; the physical body is interpolated into social experience while the symbolic dimensions of embodiment are understood via bodily physicality (see

Van Wolputte, 2004). The isotope data show us that some groups shared foods while other groups did not: in particular, middle-aged and older individuals had their own specific diet, as did other age groups. No distinctions were found for a gender-based diet that provided extra meat or carbohydrates for men or women. This lack of differentiation is a notable feature throughout the site, whether one examines diet and injury, or burial treatment such as head removal. Instead, these data suggest that age, and by extension the ageing body, may have held a particular salience during the Neolithic. This pattern is also borne out in the burial assemblages by age cohort at the site; older individuals accrued the most diverse and biographical materials that were included at death.

We suggest that a particular attention to age, ageing, and flesh pervades the representational sphere. Flesh specifically and enfleshing was a preoccupation seen repeatedly in the building installations, plastered features, plastered skulls, burials, and figurines. Flesh was a material fact of life, particularly for the site's elders, imbued with qualities of endurance and maturity, possibly even with associations of knowledge and skill. Flesh was obviously a bodily necessity during life and similarly needed to be materially sustained after death. Important individuals, both human and animal, were subject to these special acts of enfleshing. Figurines too reflected these bodily preoccupations and priorities, regardless of gender categories. This new perspective challenges older notions about matriarchy, gender hierarchies, and the privileging of female fertility. This is an important direction in archaeology, since for so long, evidence for notions of self, personhood, and embodiment have traditionally been derived from representational and art historical analyses, rather than from combining these with biological data. Here we have shown that as isotope profiles can reveal the biography of an individual's life choices and circumstances, so too corporeal histories can be gleaned from material culture that circulated through the spheres of life and death at Çatalhöyük. This paper suggests that we will find greatest resolution in our understanding of ancient bodies when we consider multi-disciplinary evidence and approaches from the archaeological record.

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