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Figurines, Wall Murals and Daggers: Objects and Art as Emotional Support for Cognitive Development and the Fear of Death

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This paper is about using ethnographic data and psychological theories to interpret the archeological remains from the 9,000-year-old Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük, Turkey.

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Author's introductory note

This “excavated” paper was written in 2004 based on research completed in 2001, but has not been published in full until now. It is presented largely as originally written.

I was first invited by Ian Hodder to visit the Çatalhöyük site in 1995 as part of the Çatalhöyük Research Project: Cambridge team. The goal of that visit was for me, as a Cambridge-trained Ph.D. ethnoarchaeologist and a licensed research and clinical psychoanalyst, to see the site and hear the discussions by the team members so that I could offer my first impressions of how psychoanalytic theories might add to the ongoing analysis and discussion of the of the wall murals and artifacts That visit led to a paper that I presented at the TAG (Theoretical Archaeology Group) meeting in Liverpool in 1996.

My involvement was part of a larger trend of including diverse perspectives on the site from diverse fields, including perspectives from outside traditional academia. This was referred to as an application of reflexive method to include multivocality. A later visit I made to the site overlapped with visits by a visual artist and by Mother Goddess devotees who were allowed and even encouraged to offer their interpretations for consideration.

I was then invited by Ian Hodder's Cambridge team and by Ruth Tringham, the leader of the BACH (Berkeley Archaeologists at Çatalhöyük) team, to return to the site in 1999 and 2001 to conduct ethnographic interviews of many local people with the help of Turkish scholars Ayfer Bartu and Aylan Erkal. This field season led to this paper, which was intended to be published in *Çatalhöyük Perspectives: Reports from 1995-99 Seasons*, Edited Ian Hodder, Vol. 6 (2005). However, the idea that psychoanalytic ideas could be relevant to the understanding of a Neolithic site was so controversial that the paper was pulled rather than allow the volume as a whole to be rejected by the publisher (McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research Monographs, Cambridge, UK).

In 2003, a summary of this chapter was published by the Turkish journal *Dünden Bugüne Cigdemli (From Yesterday to Today)* (Cigdemli Municipality Cultural Publication Series, Editor Durali Doga).

In another field season in 2003, funded by The San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis, Windholz Memorial Fund for Psychoanalytic Research, I gathered more ethnographic information with Turkish colleague Bergumsen Ergenekon. While that later material was not included in this paper for reason of length it was presented to the UC Berkeley archaeology lunchtime seminar series and at a lecture given at The San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis. Both groups showed a lot of interest in the theme and contents of the presentation.

I am grateful to Ruth Tringham for the opportunity to finally publish this paper in e-Scholarship, UC Berkeley. Her publication of this paper does not represent either an endorsement or rejection of the ideas, contained within, only an interest in making this material available to a broader audience. I see value in presenting the material as it was originally written in 2004, and hope to publish a future paper presenting the additional 2003 ethnographic data in relation to the

Linda Donley Reid/figurines

excavations and other work occurring in the years since. I welcome feedback on this article at lindadr@pacbell.net.

Linda Donley-Reid
San Francisco, November 2014

Figurines, Wall Murals and Daggers: Objects and Art as Emotional Support for Cognitive Development and the Fear of Death

Linda Donley-Reid

At Çatalhöyük, a 9,000-year-old settlement in Turkey, and at other Neolithic sites in the Near East, people created artistic representations focused on headless people and animals, as well as animal horns and daggers and the representations of leopards, vultures, and bulls. The theme of decapitation wasn't limited to images and clay figurines, but is also seen in actual remains of humans and animals. What were the symbolic meanings of these artistic representations and remains?

To suggest answers to these questions I plan to consider how the representations might relate to personal developmental and emotional needs that are often culturally structured. I plan to reflexively work between archaeological data, ethnographic analogies, and psychoanalytic theories.

Archaeological data

The archaeological data and images analyzed are selected from Mellaart's (1976) *Catal Hoyuk: A Neolithic Town in Anatolia*, *The Neolithic of the Near East* (1975), and Hodder's (1996) *On the Surface: Çatalhöyük 1993-1996*, *Catalhöyük Perspectives: Reports from 1995-99 Seasons* (2005), and images from *The Leopard's Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Çatalhöyük* (2006). I will also suggest, with a few examples, that my interpretation of the symbolism found at Çatalhöyük may be applied to similar finds from other Neolithic sites such as those as reported by Ozdogan and Basgelen (1999), Cauvin (2000) and Voigt (2000).

Ethnographic analogy and Çatalhöyük representations

Mary Douglas (1996) wrote that researchers making interpretations have to demonstrate that their interpretations were the ideas of the people being studied not just the product of a researcher's informed imagination. She suggested that by 1) showing that a pattern of meaning was repeated, 2) that the meaning was created as part of ceremonies and 3) that the meaning has coherence between multiple contexts we will move closer to convincing a reader of the possibility that the interpretations we make would also make sense to the people being studied. I took this suggestion which she applied to a living people and applied it to the remains of a past culture.

I have also made use of ethnographic observation of living cultures to form analogies that stimulate my hypothesis formation. The ethnographic observations that I chose came from Turkish villages and African herders, namely the Maasai in Kenya and the Dinka of Sudan. The Turkish information is important because village people both now and in the past have similar environmental resources. The area has become drier but the seasonal patterns remain in broad terms the same. The people who live around Çatalhöyük today also practice agriculture, tend sheep and goats and live in clay brick houses. All elders, everywhere, past and present have to help the younger generation to learn roles within their cultural context and have to cope emotionally with their fears that are primarily related, directly or indirectly to death. People both now and 9,000 years ago die from illnesses, extreme weather conditions (droughts, flood), food

shortages, childbirth, injuries (falls, animal attacks) and other causes. As a starting point for interpreting the figurines and wall murals, I needed some ideas about how the people within this environment use their resources both physically and emotionally. Mellaart (1975, 11) and Matthews et al (2000) suggested that studies of Turkish villages might be helpful in formulating theories about prehistoric people in the Near East. Voigt noted that Mellaart used a direct historical approach to infer a mythological and ritual system centered on the 'Great Goddess' (Mellaart 1967, 202) and that Hodder, in his early writings about Çatalhöyük (1990, 5-8) made comparisons with the Nuba of Sudan. Voigt chose two other Neolithic sites in northwestern Iran and southeastern Turkey and Turkish ethnographic analogy to contextualize her interpretations of Çatalhöyük data.

Members from the Çatalhöyük team and I interviewed men and women from the nearby village of Küçükköy, some of whom were working at the Çatalhöyük site. In 2001 Turkish anthropologist Ayfer Bartu assisted us with the interviews. I also had many discussions with a Berkeley Turkish archaeology graduate student, Aylan Erkal, about her grandmothers' beliefs and practices. In addition to interviews, I studied the following: 1) published notes of F.H. Hasluck, a British historian who was interested in pagan, early Christian and Islamic practices in Turkey in the late 1920's, 2) the ethnographic reports of a Turkish teacher, Mahmut Makal, about Anatolia village life in the 1950s, and 3) Carol Delaney's study (1991) of an Anatolian settlement. Many major changes have occurred since Neolithic times. Turkish villages are **not** the same as Neolithic settlements. Turks are now Muslims and part of the global economy. Islam forbids the symbolic use of figurines and images such as the Neolithic wall murals so local people do not relate easily to these representations. Other major changes have occurred since Neolithic times. The large cattle species that existed 9,000 years ago is now extinct and the large cats (referred to in previous Çatalhöyük accounts as leopards) no longer prey on people and their livestock. However, Aylan Erkal's 90 year old Turkish grandmother said when she was young big wild cats killed their livestock.

Because I want to interpret the Neolithic images of wild animals (especially large cats and bulls) and their relationship to people, and since wild cats no longer live in the area, I needed to find a model of those interactions. I chose the Maasai people of Kenya because like the Neolithic people of Çatalhöyük, they hold cattle and some wild animals in high esteem and have to cope with the threat of carnivorous aggression. My field experience with the Maasai peoples, although limited, lent further weight to the choice and understanding of the Maasai culture as an analogy. Information about the Dinka of Sudan yielded additional ideas about the attitudes that people can have about cattle.

Psychological theories in relation to Çatalhöyük representations

There is a core dynamic in human beings that many researchers are trying to understand. It has to do with our relationships with objects/representations and animals. It is difficult to say where this investigation started but it certainly goes back as far as Tylor (1875) writing about animism. I started my theoretical struggle with the social or symbolic meaning of Swahili material culture within the context of ethnoarchaeology (Donley 1982; Donley-Reid, 1984, 1990a, 1990b). I called chairs, beads, houses and sometimes people 'symbolic markers' and found Anthony Giddens' (1981) structuration theory, Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) habitus and Mary Douglas' (1966, 1970, 1979) constructs helpful but I felt that the process was most basically a

psychological one. That is why I turned to Freud (1920, 14-16) and then to Winnicott (1951, 1960) and Erikson (1977, 1987), Piaget (1951) and Lusebrink (1990) among others. These psychologists have tried to learn how children and people (both in our culture and cross-culturally) think, feel and act through the symbolic uses of material representations. Material representations are archaeologists' data and there is a chance that we, as archaeologists, can also add to the understanding of human behavior by studying how objects/artifacts have been used to construct our individual and social worlds through time.

I am proposing interpretations of the Çatalhöyük data based on the psychological concept that art helps people with emotional concerns related to life and death, and with their personal developmental stages. This approach is similar to Lusebrink's arguments, basic and well researched theories, that artistic productions can be therapeutic (1990, 44-45). The idea is that through the manipulations of materials an individual (child or adult) can impose form and structure on the material (as in our data, clay figurines and wall drawings) and also on his/her own raw emotions. Visual expression facilitates the dialogue between inner and outer reality (Lusebrink, 1990, 10). Repetitive activities such as in play, daily routines and rituals help people to work through culturally unacceptable or distressing emotions. Art or representations work as containers to organize our world and help us feel more in control (Lusebrink, 1990, 11, 17, 15, 19). Making representations may have, for example, helped the people of Çatalhöyük gain a sense of mastery over their fear of aggressive animals, such as bulls and leopards.

In the case of Çatalhöyük, the symbolic code expressed in the art lasted for 1,500 years. The repeated pattern of wall images within the archeological levels can be seen clearly in Mellaart's schematic table of decorations (1967, 102, 103). Most importantly the pattern of removing heads, as we will see in the Çatalhöyük data, was repeated with human and animal remains, clay figurines and wall representations (murals and reliefs). This focus on the power of heads and the ability to control heads may have given people of Çatalhöyük a sense of mastery that allowed them to imagine they could domesticate or control many plants and animals and even stop death.

By understanding the possible psychological benefits of the Çatalhöyük representations we may be able to discover an aspect of the meaning of the figurines, wall murals and decapitation. But how do we know that the people of Çatalhöyük were stressed and needed to use art to help them cope emotionally? I am basing this assumption on the idea that they were afraid of death and that this causes anxiety in all human beings. Francis writes that 'primitive anxieties appear to be the earliest and most excruciating experiences to humankind' (1997, 230). He adds that many psychologists have described this horror in terms of persecutory fears and annihilation anxiety (Klein 1946); nameless dread (Bion 1962); fear of dying (Bion 1979); fear of implosion or engulfment (Laing 1960); impingement or unthinkable anxiety (Winnicott 1960); and ontological insecurity (Klein, 1946, Laning 1960). Why are all human beings so anxious? We are fearful because we are dependent and vulnerable. Small (1998) believes that the root of all human anxiety is our long dependency period, from birth to about age seven. This long dependency becomes intrinsic to our character and we develop a lasting desire for external protection. We fear we cannot take care of ourselves. An external power, once represented by our mother or a caretaker's hands, eyes and face, helps us psychologically survive and feel safe. We have a lifelong desire for both independence and dependence on someone or something outside ourselves (Modell, 1968, 16).

That external power is often part of a shared cultural belief system referred to as religion. The psychological anthropologist Melford Spiro saw religion as a 'culturally constituted (ego) defense mechanism' (1965). Defense mechanisms are learned behaviours that help us feel less anxious and be less impulsive. One defense mechanism, identification with an aggressor, may be a useful conceptual tool for us in understanding why the people at Çatalhöyük made representations of bulls, leopards and vultures (A. Freud, 1946, 117-132; Peller, 1954, 178-180, 189). The idea is that when we feel small and helpless like we do as children or when facing an aggressive animal, we try to be like the aggressor by acting or dressing in ways that imitate or embody the aggressor. In many cultures people so imitating or embodying an animal express the experience as actually becoming the animal. This metaphysical transformation is importantly linked to the agency seen in token objects.

We also try to reverse the situation so we are in control. We are sometimes in a passive position and we try to take the active role. By identifying with the aggressor we are able to retaliate and protect ourselves. This can happen in many ways and on different levels. For example the people at Çatalhöyük could 'be a leopard' by dressing like one or perhaps feel more powerful by being able to draw or make a clay relief leopard on the wall. On a more basic level they could just be learning information and practicing leopard-style hunting skills that will help them cope with bulls and leopards as adults. Learning skills also makes us feel less fearful and less the passive victim.

D.W. Winnicott, a child psychoanalyst, also developed a conceptual tool that could be useful to us as archaeologists. He found, as have many analysts after him, that children use material objects in their critical separation process from their mothers/caretakers (see Grolick and Barkin's 1978 collection of papers about child, adult, cross-cultural and Etruscan artifacts). Winnicott noted that just after a child is weaned he or she creates what he calls a 'transitional object' (1951, 1971). A transitional object (a blanket, teddy bear, piece of cloth or fur) is something that a child selects from the real world and gives symbolic powers. The child's thoughts give the object special significance which is respected by others. The act of the child giving meaning to an object is a cross-cultural phenomenon but is not observed in other animals. This psychological process allows material objects to 'hold' meaning for people of all ages. We imbue things, such as a talisman, with the power to make us feel better (like our caretaker did) until we are able to do this without the aid of an external representation (Greenson, 1978, 207). We often exchange one transitional object for another that is more age and culturally appropriate.

I want to suggest that the people at Çatalhöyük made objects, such as figurines, wall reliefs and drawings and used parts of animals (cattle and human skulls) to feel more powerful and to create forms of perceived external protection. Psychology has taught us that we can reduce anxiety by practicing activities. We also manage our fears by making concrete representations. When we make or use an object to represent our concern we feel more powerful because we can now see the fear and not just feel it. We have been able to externalize the anxiety and we work with it until we have a sense of mastery over it. The classic example, that helped me understand this process, was of Freud watching his nephew repeatedly throwing a spool over the edge of his bed and making a sad noise then pulling it back and making a happy sound. Freud interpreted the play as his nephew's attempt to master his separation anxiety when his mother left him to go out

to work. He was actively trying to master his anxiety by pretending he was in control (Freud, 1920, 14-16). If Freud had asked the child what he was doing, he would have probably said, 'playing'. He would not have replied that he was trying to master the distress over his mother's departure. The people at Çatalhöyük may not have understood, on a conscious level, why they made the images of cattle and vultures. However, that does not prevent us from establishing the aspects of their environment that troubled them and thus deducing why certain representations provided psychological support.

Figurines

Most of the well-made figurines found in the Çatalhöyük excavation are full-figured females mature enough to bear children (Figs. 1a and 1b). If a Çatalhöyük woman wanted to be pregnant did she make or request another woman make a figurine that resembled a woman who bore the hallmarks of fertility and was therefore able to help her? Delaney (1991) gives rich descriptions of how women in Turkey support each other during childbirth but she and Voigt (2000, 269) say that women reported that half of their children died in the first few years of life. An external representation of a female power, such as a female figurine, that could be called on to help would have been useful psychologically to the women of Çatalhöyük. Hamilton (1996, 225-226) and Voigt (2000, 277) seem to agree with this broad interpretation of the larger, well-formed female figurines as being related to fertility

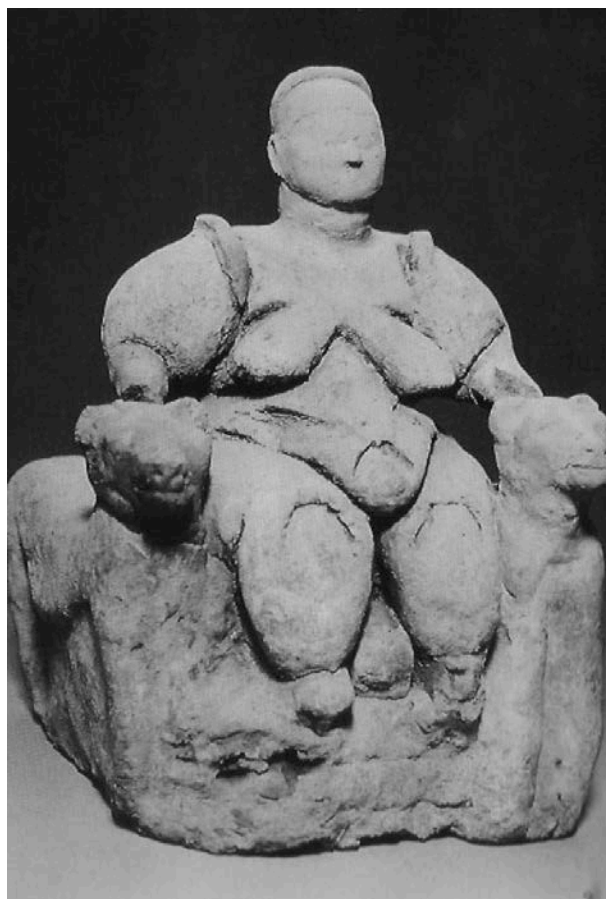


Figure 1a. The famous "Mother Goddess" figurine from Çatalhöyük shown with a reconstructed head.



Figure 1b. Well-made figurines found at Çatalhöyük are full-figured females mature enough to bear children.

At Çatalhöyük the small, usually sexless figurines referred to as humanoids and the zoomorphic figurines (Figs. 2a and 2b) could be ‘wish-vehicles’, charms or toys as Broman Morales (1983, 376, 393) suggested for those she examined at Jarmo. Hamilton (2002, 2) Broman Morales and Voigt (2000, 276) all noted the making of the figurine might itself represent a wish or prayer. Figurines, similar to those found at Çatalhöyük were found earlier at Cayonu (10,000 BC), Cafer Hoyuk (9,000 BC), and later at Cayonu-Hoyucek (6,000 BC), Ilipinar (5,500 BC) (Ozdogan, M., and Basgelen, 1999) and Hacilar (5,400 BC) (Mellaart, 1975). I am suggesting that female figurines were a central element of the Neolithic Near East material culture because they addressed the fertility, not only of people, but perhaps of plants and animals as well. Esin (1999, 15) makes the important point that just as the grinding and polishing of stones and carving of antler and bone implements helped meet the subsistence needs of hunters, so clay figurines met the (psychological) needs of herders and farmers in the Neolithic.

I believe that female figurines found at Çatalhöyük provided women with emotional support especially for their fear related to fertility. But I am uncomfortable with the vagueness of the term ‘Mother Goddess’ that has been applied to the Çatalhöyük figurines by Mellaart (1967, 1975) and Gimbutas (1974). This issue is complex. It is safe to say that women have always been concerned about conceiving, surviving childbirth and raising healthy children. Small, hand-sized female figurines are common across a wide spectrum of time and place from the Paleolithic, Neolithic, Egyptian, Classical Greek and Roman periods, and in India and Africa from the Neolithic to the present. They re-emerged in the form of female martyrs and Mother Mary. Even within Islam where human representations, especially faces, are forbidden, Fatuma’s hand (realistic and abstract forms) represents the protective and healing power of women. Çatalhöyük

figurines could have been protective charms based on the model of women as caretakers, as in other cultures.



Figure 2a. Small, usually sexless figures referred to as humanoids from Çatalhöyük



Figure 2b. Zoomorphic figurines from Çatalhöyük

The crudely made animal figures (classified as zoomorphic in Hamilton, 2002, 2, 47) found in the excavations (Fig.2 and Mellaart, 1967, plate 66) could have been made by young boys wanting to emulate the adult men, as herders and hunters. Psychologists tell us that when we refer to these objects as toys it diminishes their importance. We might instead think about them as educational tools that were used by the young to acquaint themselves with the social structure. ‘Young children need objects and concrete images to act out and portray their fantasies, feelings and concerns. With latency-age children, expression of emotions can take place through concrete visual configurations, such as making clay figures or drawing images’ (Lusebrink, 1990, 186). (See also Joyce, 2000, ‘Girling the girl and boying the boy: the production of adulthood in ancient Mesoamerica’.) (See Fig. 3 for an artist’s representation of women in Çatalhöyük using female figurines as emotional support while children use the small figurines as learning tools.)



Figure 3. A visual presentation of a woman using a female figurine for emotion support while children use small clay figurines as learning tools. (artist: John Swogger)

Heads

An important physical feature of the Çatalhöyük figurines is that they are frequently found with their heads missing. Small figurine heads that were separate from their bodies were often found in the excavation sieves. As noted in the beginning of this chapter, people believe that they can gain mastery over their external surroundings not only by imbuing objects with power but they

can also remove their power, in the case of figurines, by removing their heads. I think, as does Voigt (2000, 256), that the removal of the head or the breaking of clay figures denotes removing the power of the figurine. The removal of the figurine heads should be considered in relation to other aspects of representations found at the site. Within the Çatalhöyük context, cattle heads (and less often, other animal heads) are placed on walls and removed from walls when the house is being taken down (Hodder, 1998, 2). Wall paintings show people with and without heads. Human skulls are found without bodies and bodies are found headless buried under the floors of houses (Andrews et al., 2007). Cauvin (2000, 36) refers to a widespread interest in human heads, or as he calls them, 'skull cults' at many Neolithic sites. For example, at the site of Hallan Cemi Tepesi, the oldest (11,000 BP) Neolithic site in Turkey, three sheep's skulls were found lined up on a floor surface. An aurochs skull, believed to have been removed from a north wall, was also found there. Carved animal heads were found on top of stone pestles also found at Hallan Cemi Tepesi. A Skull Building (BM1) was discovered at Cayonu that had a large pit burial of many human remains and some aurochs skulls and horns (Ozdogan, A., 1999, 47). Seventy human skulls were recovered (Ozdogan, M., 1997, 445). Maybe these were the beginning of the 'skull cult' and the primary roots of a symbolic system or cultural network. Çatalhöyük can easily be linked to Hallan Cemi Tepesi and Cayonu because all three sites used animal skulls (Ozdogan, A., 1999, 27-28, 30, 59).

Heads may have embodied power. Perhaps power was taken, symbolically, from animals, for use in the house by placing their skulls or skins on the walls at Çatalhöyük. Conversely, the power was removed when the skulls were taken down from the wall. Mellaart (1967, 82) says that the ritual power would appear to have been removed either by whitewashing the wall paintings and when the heads were removed from plaster-reliefs. A figurine had power when it had a head and lost that power when the head was broken off. Hamilton also considered the same line of questioning while analyzing the finds of a figurine (5043.XI in building 17) whose head had been broken off and deposited with the head of another figurine (2002, 41).

There is no doubt that women did support each other. The double goddess figurines with two heads and four breasts but only two arms, which occur at Çatalhöyük, Hacilar and Kultepe, are an example of this. But what about the times when jealousy and mistrust were an issue? If women died in childbirth or a child was stillborn, the figurines might be blamed for the death. The figurine's power would have to be stopped. Removing its head was, I think, believed to stop the evil power. Heads of figurines were thought to have been intentionally broken off not only at Çatalhöyük but also at other Neolithic sites, such as Cafer Hoyuk and Gobekli Tepe (Ozdogan, A., ed., 1999, 53, 94) and Jarmo (Broman Morales, 1983, 383). Usually, an object with power is focused in a positive direction. But there is always the chance that someone will convince the object to do evil. As mentioned above, breaking a clay object or maybe even throwing it away in a midden or ash heap might stop its power, but the broken object was also often kept in the house. Perhaps the object was kept because of the lingering fear that the object might still retain power and might take its revenge on the person who broke it. This would explain Hamilton's realization that broken figurines were found in buildings alongside complete ones, suggesting they continued to be of importance after their destruction (1996, 219-221, and 2002, 40).

Wall murals and animal horns

Maybe the hunting murals at Çatalhöyük represent the first stage of the male initiations in the rites of passage that led to manhood. These murals emphasize the teamwork required for a group of men armed with bows and arrows to bring the deer hunt to a successful conclusion (Fig. 4). The wall murals may have provided a stage for basic hunting instructions. How would the young men feel about killing animals or being killed by an animal? They would have lived with and probably enjoyed playing with the young animals kept in the settlement. How could they be helped with these psychological conflicts? It might not be enough to say to the boys that animals need to die because people like to eat meat. One suggestion about the meaning of the ritual comes again from Hasluck (1929, 461 based on Carnoy and Nicolaidis, 1892, 10). He noted that stags were believed in Turkey to be holy animals, and it was unlucky to shoot them. However, the stags are said to offer themselves for sacrifice, when other animals fail. On this account the stag horns are often hung in *tekkes* (Muslim monasteries). 'Horns of deer and other animals, such as goats and oxen, are occasionally seen in *turbes* (*Muslim* mausoleums): these may be those of sacrificed beasts, they are probably kept and exhibited for their prophylactic value (as a talisman)' (Hasluck, 1929, 231, quoting from Niebuhr, 138). Boys at Çatalhöyük may have been told that animals want to die for human being's wellbeing and hunters are only helping the animal with the sacrifice.



Figure 4. A reconstructed wall mural at Çatalhöyük that men could have used to teach basic hunting techniques.

There is a widespread belief that if something is sacrificed (Abraham's son, candles, food) or sacrifices itself (as animals are at times thought to do) people can be spared. This is similar to the Christian belief that Christ sacrificed himself for us. To reinforce this sense of security, some

Christians wear or have a crucifix on the wall. I want to suggest that at Çatalhöyük, small clay horns were made as talismans for the young men to imbue them with a sense of security when they went out on their first hunt (Fig. 5). The very common small clay horns have been interpreted as earrings at Çatalhöyük (Hamilton 2002, 11). A. Ozdogan (1999, 59) at Cayonu called the same finds, ‘unusual objects, such as studs’ and Rosenberg (1999, 30) at Hallan Cemi called them ‘miniature stylized bucrania’. I think they are all horn shaped amulets. I think that the first clay objects, that A. Ozdogan (1999, 59) says are ‘unusual objects, such as studs’, are also the small representations of animal horns or personal amulets. These ‘unusual’ clay objects were found in stone, rather than clay, at the 11,000 BC site of Hallan Cemi where Rosenberg (1999, 30) referred them to as ‘miniature stylized bucrania’. Broman Morales (1983, figs. 147, 148, 149) also found animal figurines with their horns broken off and small clay horns. Elworthy describes the use of horns and horn shaped charms much later (19th century) in common use, especially in Italy but also in England, Europe and the Near East. He says that horns of bullocks, rams and goats were placed over doors for protection and smaller ones for individual protection were made from of coral, gold, silver, mother of pearl, amber and lava (1989, 258-260). Dinka and Nuer men, devoted cattle herders in Sudan, wear ivory or wooden pendants carved in the shape of horns (Fisher, 1984, 16, 42, 54, 57).



Figure 5. Small clay horn (photo: Linda Donley-Reid)

Charms are in common use throughout the world. These small clay horns that are found in the Near East may be the earliest recorded. One hundred and twenty-five of these small clay animal horns have been found at Çatalhöyük . They are the most common fragments to have been excavated at Çatalhöyük (181) or 78% of the zoomorphic assemblage in the excavations to date (Hamilton, 2002, 5, 19, 24). The clay horns occur from the earliest to the latest levels. Being protected by horns made of clay or real horns placed on the house wall could be a direct reading, on the part of the Neolithic people, of how those animals used horns to protect themselves. The conceptual creation in the Neolithic was the illusion that people could also use horns for their protection. To have an object that could be worn for protection would have met an emotional need, especially for a young person leaving home for the first time. If a charm fails or becomes

harmful it can be destroyed. In the same way the malfunctioning power of the small horn could have been stopped by breaking the object or by throwing it away in a midden or ash heap. This could explain why these small clay animal horns are often found in ashy rake-out, which was often the case at Çatalhöyük (Hamilton 2002, 41). Similarly sized small plastic horns are now sold as protective charms in markets at Konya.

Initiation

At Çatalhöyük the most common (eight, based on Mellaart's schematic tables, 1967, 101, 102) wall murals or plaster cutouts are of large bulls, which are sometimes surrounded by apparently energetic and agile human figures (Fig. 6). These human figures are slim, are sometimes bearded, do not have large breasts and are associated with the large, powerful animals.



Figure 6. Çatalhöyük wall mural that may have been used in rituals.

During the Neolithic, the largest and strongest animal near Çatalhöyük was a species of wild cattle, now extinct. Mellaart (1967, 102, 103) recorded cattle imagery in every level of occupation. I think it likely that the people who lived at Çatalhöyük believed that they could assume an animal's power by removing its head or horns and mounting it on the wall. The bull represented by its head or horns could magically accord emotional and physical protection. The leopard was the most efficient hunter in the area around Çatalhöyük and probably the greatest threat to the people and their livestock. Men, it seems, assumed the leopard's power by wearing its skin, as depicted in wall murals (Mellaart, 1967, figs. 61, 63, and plate XIII). It seems that the people at Çatalhöyük had the illusion that they could also 'take' and 'recreate' human powers, not just animal strength or hunting skills. They recreated humans by making clay representations of people, especially mature looking females. They 'took' or collected human heads. The skulls of a male and a female were found facing each other in the closing ceremony deposits of a house (Stevanovic and Tringham, 1999) and skulls are depicted placed on house floors by Mellaart (1967, figs 14, 15).

Based on psychoanalytic theory these animal and human representations externalized protective power and made the power more convincing. The cattle, leopards and other people had powers (both protective and dangerous) that they admired. They repressed the illusion that they could use other animal's power and as a result gained emotional support. This aided their mental development because feeling less fearful enabled them to control more of their environment and

to a greater degree become more creative individuals. These emotionally supportive artistic creations, which were often inspired by powerful animals, were not unique to Çatalhöyük but were simply more developed and better preserved there. Animals that were drawn may have been felt to have the life and power of the actual animal. If the drawing was damaged or covered with whitewash, the animal's power was killed or stopped. This gave the participants a sense of mastery over life and death. In addition - following Modell (1968, 16-22) - the paintings supported the feeling that there were external powers (both the animal and its representation) that could somehow be persuaded to behave to human advantage. Rose is another psychoanalyst who has explored the emotional elements of several art forms. He (1996, 109) also believes that there is an affective element in all art that is linked to the illusion of connectedness that we long for and create what we once experienced with our caretakers. This need to create and take away external power was also expressed in Çatalhöyük by the wall paintings that were made, then plastered over and painted again. It was expressed through the making and breaking of figurines, and by molding plaster reliefs and removing them when the house was vacated (Hodder 2005).

Psychoanalytical research into how people ascribe power to objects suggests that emotional support was enhanced by the illusion that there was power in an animal that remained in that animal's image, or its meat, blood, skull, horns or skin. The power of a person in a protective role, such as a mother, could also be projected onto objects such as the female figurines. Being imbued with these objects' power made people feel safer and more emotionally stable during stressful times such as confrontations with dangerous animals or childbirth. People can think more clearly and react better when they are less frightened.



Figure 7. A visual presentation of the author's suggestion that wall murals were used to enhance rituals

I think the murals seem to be teaching and emotional aids for the boys' new activities, especially the ones that set them apart from the girls. In this analysis it is then likely that adult men made the drawings and told the stories that would become the boys' new reality. Ritual performance often also reinforces the status of adult males as leaders. These men may have also been perceived as having a special connection with the higher power of animals. Ensuring that the boys had been fasting for days, or had entered a drug or trance-induced altered state of consciousness would have lent the rituals a powerful sense of reality. Lewis-Williams (1988) has stressed that trances are often a part of ritual art.

It is possible that during rituals the older men may have emerged from darkness into firelight to cast frightening shadows on the murals within Çatalhöyük houses (Fig. 7). These apparitions would have heightened the state of the nervous anxiety experienced by the young men. Drugs, chants, songs and dance add greatly to the impact of rites of passage. The intense rituals might at first seem to be the antitheses of emotional support for boys. However if initiations were in stages they would not be too overwhelming especially if they were being experienced indoors at home. In addition to the emotional practice for managing fear, the rituals depicted in murals at Çatalhöyük were practical lessons in the art of hunting animals, perhaps ones that were both dead and alive. Maybe sometimes the animals were not killed but just found.



Figure 8. A visual presentation of vultures being used to find meat. It also represents how men wearing the skins of leopards and protective horn necklaces could feel supported emotionally in interactions with the most powerful animals in their environment. Carrion sites can also be valuable hunting opportunities.(artist: John Swogger)

Mellaart was puzzled that all the paintings of bulls depicted in the Çatalhöyük murals had the tongues hanging out. He thought that the men were teasing the bulls (Fig. 6) (Mellaart, 1967, fig. 64). I learned that when cattle are dead their tongue hangs out. Maybe that was why the figures in the mural could be depicted as dancing around the bull seemingly without fear. Is the mural telling what might have been a secret? Did men learn to watch the sky for vultures as a signal of death (Fig. 8). Vultures were drawn on several of the walls at Çatalhöyük (Mellaart, 1967, 81, fig. 14, see also plate 49). Vultures could have led people to a leopard kill. Maybe the men did not have to kill the large bulls; they just had to find them after leopards had killed them. This is the kind of story that the wall murals at Çatalhöyük could have supported during the initiation rituals (Figs. 6, 7, 8).

If this was so, then Neolithic men at Çatalhöyük displayed the courage of a leopard when they stole meat from the big cats and vultures. This activity required emotional strength as echoed in the following example of a hunter's plea. The Maasai warriors' prayer is a supplication to ease the essential anxiety of all hunters facing dangerous animals and possible death. 'No wild animal, nor vultures wings, will tamper with us.... Wild beasts and vultures, hush – your expectations were not met, for we are all still alive' (Beckwith and Saitoti 1980, 121). This last part of the initiation was about young men 'becoming' a leopard so that they could come face to face with a leopard. This may be why there are plaster reliefs of leopards facing leopards (Fig. 9). Which one represents the real leopard and which one is the man-leopard? The two are equal forces. The idea that people can transform themselves into powerful animals is not uncommon in Africa. For example it is believed that the chief of the Bamilike, in Cameroon is renowned for being able to turn himself into either a powerful elephant or leopard at will (Fisher, 1984, 96). Çatalhöyük murals also depict men wearing leopard skins, which supports this identification with the aggressive leopard. Hamilton (2002, 31) mentions Mellaart's group of four figurines with leopard imagery that were found in Shrine VIA 10. One is of a boy with a leopard.

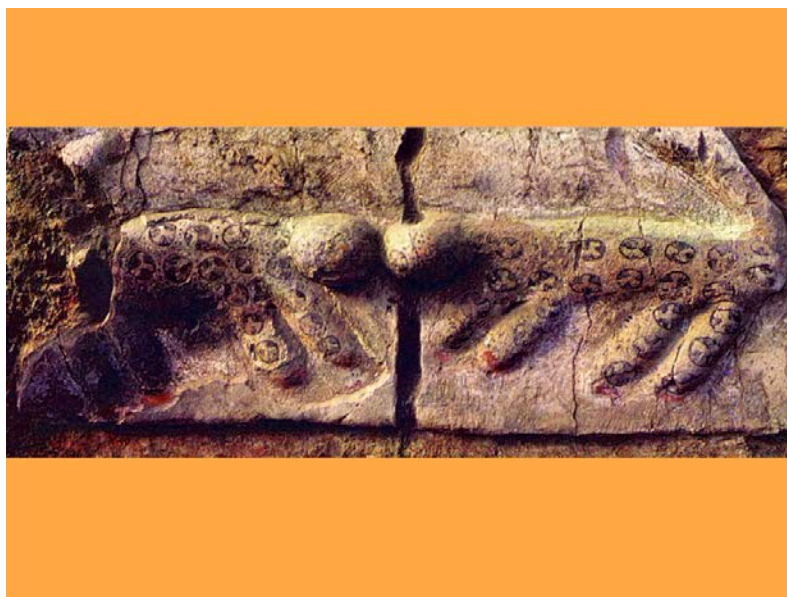


Figure 9. This wall relief may be a Neolithic representation of men becoming man-leopards able to confront real leopards.

The leopard is at its most vulnerable when on a kill (Fig. 8). This is when men would have the best chance to shoot a big cat with a bow and arrow and then skin it. Based on ethnographic analogy, the message for young men at Çatalhöyük could have been that if they did as the elders told them, they would have nothing to fear. They were told you will be a great hunter like the leopard; you will be a leopard. And you will be doing a very great thing for the most powerful of animals, the bull. You can bring the bull's strength to the people of the village in the form of the bull's meat for a community feast. You will be honoring the bull's power. And you will have the source of his power, the bull's head, on your wall to protect you and your family.

Maasai cattle embody God on earth. The ritual consumption of meat creates a mentonymical relationship between men and God (Arhem 1987, 34). If the Çatalhöyük wall murals were made and used by older men in the initiation of younger men, they would have established a powerful relationship between the power of the bull and men in the society. The wall murals depicting the death of a great bull were, I believe, created as a part of each ritual and then plastered over and recreated for the next initiation. As mentioned earlier, this process reinforced the sense of power and mastery over life (creating) and death (covering). I think this relationship between people and cattle should be considered more in the future with regard to the Neolithic in the Near East and Europe. The concept that a life (man or beast) can be sacrificed for the wellbeing of others is a recurring theme.

There is an additional or alternative interpretation to the large cattle murals at Çatalhöyük that also derives from the Maasai analogy. A Maasai man (Samuel Sekerot) told me that to subdue cattle for slaughter, one man pulls the animal's tail, while one or two men grab the horns. As it bellows in protest it sticks out its tongue. To capture a bull by its horns and throw it to the ground is a warrior's greatest test of strength. Boys must wrestle a bull to the ground in a ceremony called Embolata Olkiteng ('holding the bull by the horns') before they can be considered to be men (Beckwith and Saitoti 1980, 58). I was told that the Maasai would grab the tail of a lion to throw it off balance before they killed it.

Bull's tails may be featured in the Çatalhöyük wall murals for another reason that also evokes Maasai traditions. Warriors hunt lion in groups, but the first to spear the quarry (and, therefore, the one considered the bravest) is rewarded with the lion's mane and tail. The second man to spear the lion takes its paw. Both men stick their trophies onto their spears. 'They (the group of warriors) perform a symbolic dance around the lion's carcass and then, with triumph, they head home to celebrate' (Beckwith and Saitoti 1980, 119). These practices resemble Çatalhöyük murals (preserved in the Anatolian Civilizations Museum in Ankara) because one wall painting shows human figures, one between the horns, one at the tail and a third in front of the bull's protruding tongue. Hamilton wonders why some of the animal figurines are depicted lying down and while others have no tails (2002, 19, 23). Possible answers may come from this Maasai analogy, or other groups whose lives are focused on cattle. The figures that appear to be running and jumping around the bull in the wall murals may be depicting another kind of initiation. A young Hamar man in Ethiopia undergoes a ritual called 'jumping of the bull', wherein he must leap over the backs of between twenty and forty cattle to prove his manhood.

Daggers

From Makal (1954, 127-8) we learned that, for a Turkish person, an animal is sacrificed by having its head removed by the male head of the household. The youngest male present is blessed by having the animal's blood put on his forehead (Aylan interview 2001). Kucukkoy men emphasized that they use special knives to sacrifice animals and divide the meat for distribution. Wives are forbidden to use these knives. Perhaps the daggers (**Fig. 10**) excavated at Çatalhöyük were used for cutting off heads of animals and sometimes of people (Andrews et al., 2007, decapitated individuals catalogued as 1466 and 4593). Mellaart (1967, 208, 209) found one of the 'ceremonial' daggers buried with a man. A. Ozdogan (1999,47) also excavated the remains of fifteen individuals under a sealed floor at Cayonu, which were found with beads and a flint knife. Could the daggers have held symbolic meaning as well as having a practical use?



Figure 10. Dagger excavated in 1997 in Space 89 in the BACH (Berkeley Archaeologists @Çatalhöyük) Area at Çatalhöyük. In addition to their basic functions, such daggers may have symbolized male power over animals and perhaps over other people (photo: Çatalhöyük Research Project team)

Conclusion

If we, as a species, had not stood upright, we would not be born as dependent as we are. The theory from physical anthropology is that standing upright required a smaller pelvis and therefore infants had to be born before their brain and head became too large to pass through the birth canal. As a result babies are dependent on caretakers for an extraordinary long period and we continue to long for an external power to look after us even as adults. When we realize that our parents are not as powerful as we thought, we seek something more powerful. The people at Çatalhöyük may have felt animals were more powerful than they were and imagined they could somehow capture their power.

I have presented reflexive relationships between the theories and data of three disciplines, psychology, archaeology and anthropology, which may have decoded some of the Çatalhöyük

symbolism. Human and animal heads and the horns have been interpreted as protective charms and therefore psychological support for the people of the Neolithic. Female figurines have been interpreted as representations that helped reduce the fears associated with infertility, maternal and infant mortality and perhaps also infertility in agriculture and animal husbandry. Cognitive and emotional development was supported from childhood to the dying process by people creating material culture, daily activity patterns and rituals that helped cope with life's difficulties. They created myths to explain life and made those ideas concrete in the form of murals and figurines and other artifacts. These material representations, based on psychoanalytic theories, made the ideas easier to master. The making and drawing of animals to help hold abstract ideas was a real breakthrough in human evolution. Daggers were interpreted as symbols of power that helped men feel less anxious when facing threats in the world or when they killed. In general the illusions of power that were created helped the people of Çatalhöyük become emotionally more stable and therefore better able to think clearly, even in the face of death. However paradoxical, these illusions support rational thinking.

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Sources for figures

Figure 1a. The famous “Mother Goddess” figurine from **Çatalhöyük** shown with a reconstructed head. Reprinted with permission from Hodder, I., 2006. **Çatalhöyük: The Leopard’s Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Turkey’s Ancient ‘Town.’** New York: Thames & Hudson. (Fig. 24, page 160)

Figure 1b. Well-made figurines found at **Çatalhöyük** are full-figured females mature enough to bear children. Reprinted with permission from Hodder, I., 2006. **Çatalhöyük: The Leopard’s Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Turkey’s Ancient ‘Town.’** New York: Thames & Hudson. (Fig. 109, page 255)

Figure 2a. Small, usually sexless figures referred to as humanoids. Reprinted with permission from Hodder, I., 2006. **Çatalhöyük: The Leopard’s Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Turkey’s Ancient ‘Town.’** New York: Thames & Hudson. (Fig. 82, page 191)

Figure 2b. Zoomorphic figurines. Reprinted with permission from Hodder, I., 2006. **Çatalhöyük: The Leopard’s Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Turkey’s Ancient ‘Town.’** New York: Thames & Hudson. (Fig. 19, page 158)

Figure 3. A visual presentation of a woman using a female figurine for emotion support while children use small clay figurines as learning tools. Original art created for this paper by John Swogger.

Figure 4. A reconstructed wall mural at **Çatalhöyük** that men could have used to teach basic hunting techniques. Original art created for this paper by John Swogger.

Figure 5. Small clay horn. Photo by author.

Figure 6. **Çatalhöyük** wall mural that may have been used in rituals. Reprinted with permission from Hodder, I., 2006. **Çatalhöyük: The Leopard’s Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Turkey’s Ancient ‘Town.’** New York: Thames & Hudson. (Fig 15, page 156)

Figure 7. A visual presentation of the author's suggestion that wall murals were used to enhance rituals. Original art created for this paper by John Swogger.

Figure 8. A visual presentation of vultures being used to find meat. It also represents how men wearing the skins of leopards and protective horn necklaces could feel supported emotionally in interactions with the most powerful animals in their environment. Carrion sites can also be valuable hunting opportunities. Original art created for this paper by John Swogger.

Figure 9. This wall relief may be a Neolithic representation of men becoming man- leopards able to confront real leopards. Reprinted with permission from Hodder, I., 2006. **Çatalhöyük: The**

Leopard's Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Turkey's Ancient 'Town.' New York: Thames & Hudson. (Fig 9, page 153)

Figure 10. Dagger excavated in 1997 in Space 89 in the BACH (Berkeley Archaeologists @Çatalhöyük) Area at Çatalhöyük. In addition to their basic functions, such daggers may have symbolized male power over animals and perhaps over other people. Photograph reprinted with permission of the Çatalhöyük Research Project team.