

## 2000 Figurine Report – Naomi Hamilton

### Figurines and Special Finds

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#### *Abstract*

Very few figurines were found this year, as excavation was restricted. Only one requires description here. 6260.X1 is the upper half of a human figure with an oblong head set on a wide neck. It is not quite like anything found by Mellaart, and without the lower body it is unclear what pose it originally had, but is almost identical to 1652.H2, found in South in 1996. 6260.X1 is made of white clay or marl, and measures 18mm top of head to waist, 16mm hand to hand, and 12.5mm front to back.

From the West mound, a unique square plaster bowl/basin with flaring sides, painted on the exterior in black and red geometric designs, was found upright on an earth floor, and is the most spectacular find so far.

### Figurines

Very few figurines were found this year, as excavation was restricted to the BACH area and work there concentrated on the removal of burials and floors. Surface scraping also took place in two areas of the main mound, labelled SP and TP.

22 figurines and fragments of figurines were recovered from BACH this year. Most were unremarkable - 12 pieces of animal horn, 3 uncertain fragments, 6 humanoid fragments all of types seen before, and a single human. This last is the only one that requires description.

6260.X1 is the upper half of a human figure ([Figure 40](#)). Unfortunately it was recovered from an animal hole, so its context of deposition is unknown. The head is almost identical to one found in 1996 in South area - 1652.H2 - although that one was rather larger. The heads are oblong, with flat tops, and protuberances for ears, set on wide necks. The back of the head and neck is flat, and the top is triangular because of the large nose. Although within both the humanoid and human traditions of other figurine heads at Çatalhöyük, these two are distinctively different from others and close to each other. Each has incised eyes and mouth, punctures for nostrils, and two holes in each ear.

1652.H2 is broken at the base of the neck so that it is unknown to what type of body it was once attached. 6260.X1 might answer part of that question for us, as it continues down to the waist with stub arms to either side, and large individually modelled breasts pointing forwards, with

nipples depicted. The back continues flat all the way down, emphasising the rounded form of the front.

While in some ways this could be seen as a typical "mother-goddess"-type figurine, it is actually not like anything found by Mellaart, and without the lower body it is unclear what pose it originally had. It is of particular interest that it was found in BACH area, while 1652.H2 was found in South, as they are so similar. This could suggest the use of some form of archetypal model, but given the pattern of variety in figurine type at Çatalhöyük so far, it is more likely that they were made for a specific purpose, possibly by the same person. If they represented a deity we would expect to find similar figures throughout the site. Indeed, it is by no means certain that 1652.H2 would have had the same type of body as 6260.X1; merely, the heads are practically the same.

6260.X1 is made of white clay or marl, and measures 18mm top of head to waist, 16mm hand to hand, and 12.5mm front to back.

18 figurine fragments were found at trench SP on the southern slope of the main mound. Seven were animal horns, six humanoid fragments, and five uncertain.

No figurines have been found so far in the surface scraping at trench TP, close to Summit.

### **West mound Figurines**

Three complete (or virtually complete) baked clay figurines were found this year, in addition to a number of fragments.

6538.H3 is a schematic human figure of a type not seen before at Çatalhöyük. It is sub-triangular in shape, with a bulbous body and schematised head, with front and back almost flat. It has no features or decoration of any kind. (20 mm high, 17 mm wide, 9 mm thick)

3470.H1 appears to be a schematic humanoid figure, with conical base/body offering some indication of an arm on the right and a rough indication of a head. Far more schematic than the humanoids found on the East Mound. (13 mm high, 14 mm wide, 13 mm deep)

3447.H1 is a hornless, standing quadruped with small tail ([Figure 41](#)). Almost certainly intended to represent a sheep, it is similar to some figurines found on the East Mound. (21 mm high, 24 mm long, 13 mm wide)

### **Other finds**

6423.H2 is a "stamp seal" of baked clay. Roughly pyramidal in shape but with curving edges, it is broken along one side and one end. Around three-quarters of the incised oblong surface remains. The design consists of a diagonal line across the middle, with two curving lines in one sector and two straighter ones in the other. It was found in the scrape area TP, which represents the latest levels on the mound, and is only the third of its kind to be found during the current

work. Mellaart found around 20 similar objects during his excavations, all in the upper levels of the site (IV, III and II). Surviving surface 29mm x 23mm, 17mm high.

6423.H1 is a complete dentalium shell. Thin slices of dentalium shell occur regularly as beads both within a wide range of contexts including burials. However, this is the first uncut dentalium shell to be found on the site. Uncut dentalium is used in necklaces and bracelets in sites in the Levant and Cyprus at this time, but sliced ones are not used, and the different usage of dentalium at Çatalhöyük is very marked. This shell was found in the scrape area TP, and is therefore from the latest levels. Whether it represents a new usage of dentalium or is simply to be regarded as raw material, is not clear but the latter should be assumed at present. 63mm long, 10mm diameter (max).

## **The West Mound Finds**

### **Plaster**

6571.X1 is an apparently unique square plaster bowl/basin found on an informal earth surface in space 193 ([Figure 42](#)). The bowl was found upright on the surface, with a black deposit inside it which has been sampled for identification (not yet available). The exterior is painted in bichrome geometric decoration of parallel red and black lines forming diamonds and zig-zags. A red line is painted around the upper surface of the rim. In shape, this bowl has some similarities to oblong ceramics known from both this site and other Chalcolithic sites in Anatolia, in particular Hacilar and Kösk Höyük. However, the sharp angles and strong geometric lines on our bowl contrast with the curved corners and shallow sides commonly found on oblong vessels. This is a most exciting find, and no parallels are so far known to us. About 20 x 20 cm at the rim and *c.* 12.5 cm high, the sides slope in to a small square footed base *c.* 9 x 9 cm.

### **Worked bone**

A few items of particular interest are mentioned here, until a complete worked bone report becomes available.

3468.X1 is a slender worked bone object thought to be a spindle. It has a long slender shaft, ovoid in section, carved at intervals with multiple horizontal rings and with a twisting pattern at the lower end. The tip is missing, and the other end terminates in a curve which is also broken and may have continued to form a ring or could have been a crescent. It was found beneath the left shoulder of skeleton 3471 in grave F700, and as this was a rather magnificent tomb, it may signify the status of the person buried here - identified so far as an adult female - as a matron overseeing a household. (176 mm long, 11 mm wide (shaft), 20.5 mm wide (end), 8.5 mm thick)

3431.H2 is an unusual piece of carved bone which looks rather like a key. The notches on the □key□ protrusion have been suggested to represent a human face in profile, but this is not certain. As this item came from ploughsoil, its date is unclear. (73 mm long, 24 mm wide, 5 mm thick)

6538.F1 is an oblong-headed pin of a type not found so far on the East Mound. It is well-polished with a short point, and a roughly oblong head flattened on front and back to create a rectangular end. It was found in room-fill in Space 195, but as this was disturbed by later burial activity it may not be *in situ*. However, it is presumed to be Chalcolithic. (45 mm long, 10 mm wide, 7.5 mm thick)

## **Metal**

3468.X2 is a copper-alloy ring with inset signet made of a translucent yellow-brown stone, not yet identified ([Figure 39](#)). The design is either a bird or plants, but due to the poor state of preservation of the metal it has not been possible so far to take an impression. This ring was found beside the right thumb of skeleton 3471 in grave F700. The inner measurement of the ring is 17 x 13 mm, maximum thickness of the metal is 3.5 mm; the oval seal stone measures 15 x 11 mm, maximum 3.5 mm thick.

6545.H1 is a horseshoe-shaped ear-ring of copper-alloy, with round section. Presumably Roman/Byzantine, it was found in a robber pit cutting grave F709, and may have been derived from this burial. (9 mm high, 12 mm wide, 2 mm thick)

6545.H2 is a copper alloy object, possibly tweezers. One leg is broken, and the other is bent outwards at the level where the other is broken. This damage may have occurred if the piece was bent into a different shape from that intended, for re-use in some other way. However, it is also possible that the tool is something other than tweezers. It has a looped end which would permit suspension, although it may be merely the spring action. Presumably Roman/Byzantine, it was found in a robber pit cutting grave F709, and probably derived from this burial. (36 mm long, 15 mm wide, 3.5 mm thick)

## **Figures**

*Figure 40: Figurine 6260.X1 from the BACH Area*

*Figure 41: Figurine 3447.H1 from the West Mound*

*Figure 42: Plaster bowl 6571.X1 from the West Mound*